# THE VEDIC HORSE SACRIFICE IN ITS CULTURE-HISTORICAL RELATIONS

STEPHEN FUCHS

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*by*

**Stephen Fuchs**

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stage of our knowledge of the Indian religions it is still impossible to expect even a halfway satisfactory solution of all onrushing problems. Before such a solution can be attempted, much field-work has still to be done among the primitive tribes and especially among the individual castes of India. But it may be useful at least to raise the questions and to point out the problems which the comparative study of religions has still to tackle in India. It is regrettable that this area of research has in the past been so much neglected by the scholars of the history of religion. Their attention has too exclusively been captivated by the Indo-Aryan religions. And unfortunately these Indologists also ignored the fact that India was inhabited by peoples and races long before the Indo-Aryan invasion took place and that such non-Aryan peoples and races lived, and still live, on this subcontinent along with the Indo-Aryans. We cannot doubt that at least some of them possessed a highly developed culture of their own and certainly also modified considerably the culture and religion of the Aryan immigrants. On the other hand, naturally, Indo-Aryan culture and religion have indeed exercised a most intensive influence on the Non-Aryan cultures and religions of India. Thus arose mixtures of cultures and religions which in their variety and intricacy baffle already a superficial observer, but may bring to despair the earnest student and explorer of these cultures and religions. To what extent this is true will often enough be shown in the following pages.

It is perhaps necessary to preface the description of the Vedic horse sacrifice with a short survey of the racial situation in India. This shall be followed up with a detailed account of the Vedic horse sacrifice. Subsequently variations of the horse sacrifice which lingered on in India even after the solemn horse sacrifice of the Vedic time had become extinct shall be described. Such sacrifices appear to have survived until the present time. After that similar sacrifices shall be described as they are or were performed by the nomadic animal breeders of Asia, especially of the Indo-Germanic peoples of Europe. Then the sacrifices of the primitive hunting tribes of India, of Asia in general and especially of north-eastern Asia shall be considered. But there are also parallels of the Vedic horse sacrifice among the agrarian tribes in India and in Asia beyond

India. Naturally among the agrarian peoples and cultures this particular sacrificial complex has experienced considerable modifications.

A new variation of the Vedic horse sacrifice may be found in the funeral rites of the peoples in India, and generally in Asia. Another sacrificial complex connected with the horse sacrifice is that of the scape-goat. After the complexity and variability of this sacrificial complex have been described, it may be permitted to draw certain conclusions as to the place which this ritual occupies in the religious history of India, and of Asia in general. But the possibility cannot be denied that at the end of such a study many problems will be left unsolved. We shall have to be satisfied with having raised them, unable to give at the same time a completely satisfactory answer to them.

**Stephen Fuchs**

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE RACIAL CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

THOUGH for lack of detailed research it is still impossible to give a final judgement on the complicated racial and cultural structure of the Indian peoples, some attempts have lately been made to disentangle the various racial elements which form the ethnic composition of the present Indian population.

1. The oldest racial and cultural group which settled in India is probably that of the Negritos. However, in India they have almost totally disappeared as an independent group; they must have been assimilated or annihilated by the succeeding racial groups which settled in India. In almost pure form the Negritos are still found on the Andaman Islands though even there they are declining and may soon die out. Anthropologists maintain that traces of their previous existence on the Indian sub-continent have been found in some stray jungle tribes of South India[1], as among the Kadar of Cochin, the Kurumba, etc. of Malabar, and occasionally in some tribal pockets and in stray individuals in more inaccessible and isolated regions, as the Rajmahal hills in Bihar, in regions south of the Ganges and in some Naga villages of north-eastern India[2]. E.T. Dalton, for instance, describes one such group, the Bhuiher, as a tribe, very dark, with faces, or rather skulls, as round as a ball, with protruding jaws and thick lips, with little prominent noses, pig's eyes, large rumps and short extremities, weak muscles, short stature, not taller than five feet. . .[3]. Whether any traces of their culture can still be found must be left to future research. In any case, we must count with the possibility that a substratum of the original culture of India is derived from the Negritos.

2. Much more important, though also very old, and of fundamental significance is the group of the so-called Veddids who here and there are found as tribal remnants in more or less pure form. These Veddids are to some extent still mere foodgatherers and hunters, and only incidentally also primitive hoe-, and slash-and-burn cultivators. Perhaps the Bhil and Baiga, among others, belong to this group. At some time in the past they fell under Aryan influence and lost almost completely their original language. More remnants of this Veddid racial type are found in South India.

It is quite possible that a number of tribes who so far have been regarded as Mundarian or Kolarian belong to this racial group. Eickstedt describes them thus: "In the central, broad and expanded mountainous block of the Deccan where till this day large bush and jungle regions prevail[4] we meet . . . primitive types, dark-brown, short, with the faces of children. They belong to the Veddid . . . race and possess . . . as hoe cultivators and hunters a much lower, much less evolved and complex culture. Their extremely wide distribution and comparatively still considerable numerical strength have not been recognised until recently.[5] Eickstedt estimates their number at about 25 millions.

3. Superimposed over this Veddid group is the Dravidian-speaking racial group. The Dravidian race must be presumed by the existence of its language. Most probably these Dravidians came from Iran and are a Mediterranean "brown" race which migrated along the western coast of India into its southernmost corner, and then turned around and pushed on along the eastern coast towards the north as far as the Godavari river. It is possible that on this migration which may have taken centuries—the whole south of India was occupied and settled by these Dravidian tribes—the Dravidas assimilated some primitive Veddid tribes, pushed others ahead of them and during this contact forced not only their language[6] but more or less also their religion and culture on them. These Veddid tribes were shoved off towards the north into Central India, Bihar and Orissa[7]; it is even possible that the Dravidas themselves migrated as far as the Ganges valley and occupied the Gangetic plain while they left the hills and jungles to the primitive tribes. Tribes of the same Dravida race,

however, must have invaded the interior of northern India from the north (from Mohenjodaro, Harappa and Taxila?) and from along the west coast, from the deltas of the rivers Narbada and Tapti (where recently traces of the Mohenjodaro culture have been found[8] and must have displaced or assimilated the Veddid tribes then occupying the regions.

4. After the Dravidas, or already during their immigration, the Munda tribes invaded north-eastern and central India[9]. Eickstedt believes that they came from Indochina: "Their migration led from central farther India (*i.e.*, Indochina), which later, with Palaeo-Mongoloids, was occupied by the Thai. They were foodgathering and hunting tribes who spread into almost the whole of India.[10] Hutton, however, seems to assume that the Munda tribes reached India over two different routes from High-Asia, somewhere through the mountains around the western corner of the Himalayas and also a little to their east[11]. But B.S. Guha, D.N. Majumdar and others[12] maintain that these tribes belong to the proto-Australoid racial group and refuse to believe in their Indochinese origin. It is, however, difficult to uphold this latter theory if the assumption is right that the Munda languages belong to the Austro-Asiatic linguistic family, or more exactly, to the Mon-Khmer language group[13].

5. The Aryans formed the fifth wave of immigrants into India. They gradually occupied the whole of North and Middle India. At first the younger princelings of the Aryan chiefs went ahead with a group of followers and conquered some territory for themselves. Often they married into the families of the chieftains of the local tribes, and forced their language and culture on the religious and cultural structure of the hill tribes[14]. "These Indo-Europeans were followed in subsequent centuries by many invasions on a smaller scale. Between 500 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era northern India was invaded by Persians and Greeks, and after them by the Sakas or Skythians and by the Kushans, who were a nomadic tribe from central Asia. Again in the fifth century A.D. another horde of nomads from central Asia, the Huns, invaded northern India. In the eighth century the Muslim invasions began with an Arab invasion of Sind, and Muslim invasions of one sort or another continued until the establishment of the Mughal Empire . . ."[15]

6. In the north-eastern corner of India, Tibetan and Mongoloid tribes appeared about the same time, for instance the Dafla, Abor, Mishmi and Apa Tani. A little further to the South the much varied Naga tribes and the Kuki-Chins were settled. They show a remarkable similarity in their religion and culture with the hill tribes of Orissa[16]. The Naga tribes, who are probably racially and culturally related to the primitive tribes of eastern central India, have partly been displaced by the Tibetan and Mongoloid immigrants, partly suppressed or assimilated. The result was a peculiar mixture of very disparate racial and cultural elements which unfortunately have not yet been sufficiently studied. These tribes should in fact also be included in a study of the Central Indian tribes because they have probably retained cultural and especially religious traits which the Central Indian tribes have already lost through the acceptance of Indo-Aryan or Dravidian culture elements.[17] The Mongoloid element, on the other hand, has nowhere considerably influenced the racial and cultural constitution of India except in her north-eastern frontier-province.

In any case, this short survey which in its details is still very conjectural proves clearly that the racial as well as the cultural situation in India is extremely complex and confused. If we now ask at what time these various immigrations took place and in what series they succeeded each other, the answer must be that so far there is no agreement among the pre-historians and anthropologists on this point. If the racial situation is indeed as we just described it, then it could safely be assumed that the (Negrito and) Veddid races are the oldest in India. But the Veddid races, at least partly, have been superseded by Dravidian and Aryan immigrants—whatever their racial constitution may have been—and were partly displaced from their original habitats. The northern tribes naturally were dislocated by Aryan tribes and pushed southwards in the spearhead of the Aryan southward move; during this movement the Veddid tribes adopted Aryan forms of speech and probably also many other of their cultural elements; the southern tribes were partly assimilated by the Dravidian peoples or shoved off towards the north until both "Veddid" groups met in central India and intermingled there.

## NOTES

1. *Cf.* especially: J.H. Hutton, 1946, 2 f.; E. von Eickstedt, 1944, 186 and 396, and tables 25, 71 and 74; V. Elwin, 1943, 3 f.; D.N. Majumdar, w.d., 17; B.S. Guha, 1937, 125 f.; 1944, 11 f.
2. *Cf.* J.H. Hutton, 1946, 2.
3. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 133.
4. Alas, in the last decades, since this was written, large areas of forest have been cut down and the hills denuded. Timber is much in demand and fetches a high price.
5. E. von Eickstedt, 1944, 396.
6. Census of India, 1931, vol. I, part I, 358.
7. *Cf.* V. Elwin, 1935, 15.
8. Allchin, B & R., 1983, 167-71.
9. R. Bleichsteiner (1939, II, 158) however affirms with H. Risley (1915) that the Munda tribes are the oldest population group in India.
10. E. von Eickstedt, 1944, 308 and map 153.
11. J.H. Hutton 1940, 4. For their origin from High-Asia would also speak that the Munda use in their religious ceremonies yak tails (*Cf.* E.T. Dalton, 1872, 172). But this is also the custom of the Raj-Gond of Adilabad (C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1948, 244).
12. B.S. Guha, 1937, 131; D.N. Majumdar, w.d., 36 f.; S. Srikantha Sastri, 1942, 64.
13. R. von Heine-Geldern, 1928, 820.
14. *Cf.* E. von Eickstedt, 1944, 393 f.
15. J.H. Hutton, 1946, 5.
16. J.H. Hutton, 1949, XIV f.
17. *Cf.* J.H. Hutton 1946, 24 f.; 1921, 229; R. Mitra, 1881, 369 f.

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# 1

# THE *AŚVAMEDHA* OF THE VEDIC INDIANS

SEVERAL detailed descriptions exist of this most important horse sacrifice of the Vedic Indians. In the following pages the essential rites of the *Aśvamedha* will be shortly described, as found in the various sacred scriptures of India.

## THE *AŚVAMEDHA* ACCORDING TO THE WHITE YAJURVEDA

The Vedic Indians, whose most solemn sacrifice, a horse sacrifice, will be described in some details in the following pages, had at the time when their oldest sources were composed—If we believe their very uncertain dating it was the time between 1500 to 1000 B.C.—their habitat on the Indus river and in present Punjab. They were divided into numerous small tribes, ruled probably by princes and chiefs and a warrior nobility, which existed at the side of a priestly class which already at that time began to dissociate itself from the rest of the population and to form a special caste. These Vedic Indians lived in villages; for there is no mention of towns and urban life in the oldest texts. They were mainly animal breeders while agriculture was of minor importance. This economic situation was reflected also in the social and religious life of the Vedic Indians[1].

### Purpose and Addressees of the Horse Sacrifice[2]

The supreme sacrifice of all Vedic sacrifices is the horse sacrifice (1).

In the *Aśvamedha* the horse which is sacrificed receives an esoteric significance: it is identified with the universe[3]. It is at times also identified with *Prajāpati*, the creator and ruler of the world: in the *Aśvamedha* ultimately *Prajāpati* sacrifices himself for the well-being of the world (6). At another place of the sacred scriptures of India the sacred horse represents the sun which illuminates the world from above[4] (7), the eye of *Prajāpati* (70), and death (7). Strangely, the horse is addressed after its death as 'mother' (503). W. Koppers believes that this suggests "matriarchal sub-currents".[5] The *Aśvamedha* is admittedly the result of a mixture of various cultural elements derived from several religions.

The horse sacrifice is addressed to *Prajāpati* (7); but it is not impossible that in an older period it was addressed to other deities, as for instance the weather god Indra (who probably represents a hypostasis of the Supreme God), and still earlier to *Varuna*, the *Samraj*—Master of the Universe (XIII) or to *Yama*, the god of the nether-world.[6]

The *Aśvamedha* can only be performed by anointed kings who actually rule over a country. (8-9).

The king celebrates the sacrifice to gain the fulfilment of all his desires (2), in particular, the blessing of numerous offspring (thus testified in the *Ramayana*, in the story of Nala); then for victory in battle; for success in all enterprises, in particular in each undertaking for the expansion of the kingdom and the increase of his power; but also for the blessing and greater well-being of all his subjects (10); for deliverance from all sins, even the gravest (3). This is testified in the *Mahabharata* where the king and the princes had to stand for some time in the smoke of the sacrificial altar to be purified of the sinful murder of their relatives.[7]

## Time of the Sacrifice

The horse sacrifice proper lasts three days (11). It is introduced by dedication ceremonies which take place a full year before the actual sacrifice (12). The immediate preparation comprises twelve days of the initiation of the organiser of the sacrifice, and twelve days of preparatory sacrifices. After the horse sacrifice other sacrifices are performed throughout a whole year at different times (13-17).

## The Victim

The victim is a male horse (stallion).

The horse should be a spotted animal; one regulation demands (*Bhāllaveya*) that it is white with black spots; another regulation (*Satyayajñi*) demands that its front part be black, or at least with a black spot on the forehead (67-72), the hind-side however should be white, for the sacred horse is the symbol of the eye of *Prajāpati*—the sun: the black spot on the forehead signifies its pupil, the white portion the white in the eye. According to the *Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra* (20, 2) the horse may be black or white, brown or brown-red, or with big spots in any of these colours[8].

The victim should be a fast animal, for quickness in a horse signifies great virility (72). It should have the value of a thousand cows, for 'thousand' means 'universal' (73). The victim should be in the flower of youth, because youth signifies unlimited vitality (74). When the horse is driven in the chariot under the yoke, it should outrun every other horse, because the sun too—which the horse represents—surpasses all other elements in strength (*tapas*—heat) (75). The sacred horse should never have been mounted by any one (X).

According to Abbé Dubois[9], the victim was selected for its task already before its birth; and when the mare, its mother, had given birth, the foal was nursed for three years with extraordinary care and precaution. Again and again they performed sacrifices to *Indra* with the prayer to keep watch over the animal; to *Yama*, to guard it from death or any calamity; to *Varuna*, god of water, and to the clouds to send fertilising rain on the earth, so that much grass might grow to feed the horse. Similar prayers were addressed to other gods.

## The Sacrificing Priests

Officiating at the sacrifice are four main priests (Adhvaryu, Hotar, Brahman, Udgatar); they are assisted by three sub-priests and many other assistants for each priest (23). The Adhvaryu is the actual performer of the sacrifice, while Hotar, Udgatar and Brahman busy themselves mainly with the recitation of the various sacrificial prayers[10]. According to the *Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra* the patron of the feast—the king—

transfers the ruling powers for the time of the *Asvamedha* to the first priest (Adhvaryu) (12).

The main priests must possess certain abilities which make them fit for the right performance of the sacrifice. Above all they must possess the necessary knowledge (a precise knowledge of the rites), morally and physically they must be without blemish (23).

## The Place of Sacrifice

The place where the sacrifice is to be performed must be sufficiently large and firm, and should be sloping towards the east or north (24). On this place a hut is erected for the patron of the feast; its roof must be set in the west-east direction; later a sacrificial altar (*mahavedi*) with a fire-altar is erected from bricks on the eastern side of the place (24-26).

## Ceremonies on the Eve of the Horse's Dedication

Six or seven days before the Phālguna fullmoon (in February or March) the priests arrive at the palace of the feast's patron (27). These four main priests now prepare and eat at the place selected for the sacrifice a rice broth; through this symbolic meal they express their patron's desire for a blessing with offspring (28).

The patron of the feast, the king, donates to the main priests each a thousand cows and a gold piece (31-32), while the priests tie a golden chain around the king's neck. Through this gift the patron of the feast hopes to gain the fulfilment of all his desires, while the golden chain around his neck signifies the bestowal of power (*tejas*), light, fertility (*śukra*) and immortality through the priests.

Now the four wives of the feast's patron approach with their entourage, the first main wife, called *mahiṣi*[11], the second, his favourite, the third called 'the neglected one', and the fourth, a woman of low caste. All four wives must be present because one purpose of the sacrifice is the bestowal of fertility (39).

The patron of the feast now enters the house of the sacred fires, which was built for him, through the eastern door, while his wives enter through the southern door (45). After a sacrifice in the evening the king passes the night in the embrace (lit.

between the thighs) of his favourite wife, but without effecting complete sexual union (47). The energy required for this self-restraint in concurrent sexual excitement produces in him that creative power (*tapas*) through which in the past *Prajāpati* had created the world and through which the ascetics were enabled to work the greatest miracles (49).

## Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Sacred Horse

After several sacrifices, the horse selected for the sacrifice is brought and solemnly dedicated for the sacrifice.

To tie the horse, the priest uses a rope wound of the fibres of *darbha* grass (*Eleusina coracana*). The rope should be 12 or 13 cubits in length which is a symbol for the twelve months in the year (76-77).

The priest now addresses the horse: "You are the one who includes all (85). You are the world (86). You are the leader, the protector (87), etc." He then leads the sacred horse to a pond (93) and sprinkles it with water, to make it acceptable to *Prajāpati, Indra, Vāyu* and all the other gods (94-98).

Then a black dog is fetched and slain with a wooden club by a man of low status[12] or of low morals and is thrown under the legs of the horse into the water of the pond. The dog represents the evil, the enemy of the feast's patron. Killing the dog and throwing its body under the horse signifies victory over evil and conquest of all enemies by the patron of the feast (99-104).

After that the horse is guided to the fire and the priest offers libations (105). Then the horse is again addressed; these invocations are whispered into its ears (144-50).

Later the horse is released and driven by a priest and the patron of the feast with a herd of a hundred old geldings towards the north-east direction (the unconquered region of the sky[13] (151-53). The sacred horse is entrusted to the care of four groups of hundred young nobles each (151). Then again recitations and sacrifices are performed by the priests, and they are repeated throughout the following nine days.

## Ceremonies during the Subsequent 350 Days

From the day of the release of the sacred horse the feast's patron must every night through a whole sun year (*i.e.*, 360

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days), according to other sources at least six or three months, or only one month, or two weeks, sleep in the embrace of his favourite wife, but avoiding complete sexual union. The usual daily libations and recitals are repeated faithfully (219).

The sacred horse is allowed to roam about at pleasure; its guardians must only prevent it from approaching a mare by which its virility would be impaired, or from going into the water. They must prevent the horse also from returning home before the time fixed for the sacrifice (155).

The guardians of the horse have the right to force Brahmans who are ignorant of the *Aśvamedha* rites to pay for their support as long as they remain in the locality (*cf.* Dumont 254, 16). All kingdoms which the horse enters must be conquered by the guardians for their master, the patron of the sacrifice. If a local chief opposes the wandering of the horse, he must be attacked and defeated. If the guardians of the horse are defeated in battle, the patron of the feast cannot proceed with the ritual of the *Aśvamedha* (233-37).

If the sacred horse meets with any mishap, if it gets sick or covers a mare, gets lost or is drowned in water, certain expiatory sacrifices are required. If necessary, the horse must be replaced by another one for which the dedication rites have to be repeated (226-32).

### Ceremonies in Preparation to the Actual Sacrifice

After the time interval between dedication and sacrifice has passed, the sacred horse is made to return. Now the ceremonies of the *dikṣa* (initiation of the feast's patron) of the veneration (*upasad*), of the libation of boiling milk (*pravargya*) and of the erection of the fire altar (*agnicayana*) take place. These ceremonies last thirty days. They begin on the full-moon day of the month of *Caitra* (March or April). They are followed by six days of preparation for the *dikṣa*, twelve days of *dikṣa* ceremonies and twelve days of *upasad* rites. The celebration of the *pravargya* and *agnicayana* takes place during the *upasad* rites. (239-40).

The ceremonies of the *agnicayana*, which begin on the same day as those of the *dikṣa*, are introduced by a bloody sacrifice to *Prajāpati* or *Vāyu*. Five male living beings are sacrificed: a man, a white[14] horse, a bull, a ram and a he-goat. A later regulation made more moderate demands and was satisfied with the sacrifice of a he-goat only. But in the early time five victims were demanded and their heads immured in the lowest of the five stone layers of which the brick altar consisted. The bodies were thrown into the pond from which the clay for the bricks of the fire altar and the water for their moulding had been taken (241).

Now begins the initiation of the feast's patron: He sits down, facing eastward, in a separate room reserved for him in the hut (244). He as well as his first wife (*mahiṣi*), who is kept in another isolated room of the hut, take a bath, are shaved and their nails are pared (244). Then libations are offered (248). After that the feast's patron is seated on a black antilope skin and he has to listen to hymns praising him and saintly kings of the past (248). The same ceremonies are repeated on the six succeeding days.

On the sixth or seventh day after the sacrifice of the five male victims a pit is dug on the eastern side of the hut occupied by the feast's patron. This pit is filled with clay. Then three animals are fetched: a horse, a donkey and a he-goat, each of the animals wearing five reins of *mūnja* fibres[15]. Looking eastwards, they attend the digging of the clay of which later the earthen fire bowl (*ukha*) is moulded in which during the initiation of the feast's organiser the sacred fire is kept burning. The animals also accompany the porters of the clay to the hut after which they are released and chased away in a north-eastern direction. Then the fire-bowl is moulded and embedded in fuel laid into a pit and the furnace is fired (256).

After that the feast's patron and his wife, the *mahiṣi*, are anointed on the whole body with fresh butter (258) and after a libation (259) they are under blessings wrapped into a black antilope's skin[16]. Then in the newly moulded fire bowl a fire is lighted and 13 wooden splints each an inch long are thrown into the fire and 13 blessings are recited. Then follows the offering of boiling milk (*pravargya*) which offering is repeated also on the other days of the *upasad* (veneration) (293).

On the last day of the initiation (*dikṣa*) the great altar (*mahāvedi*) is measured out and built up (294). A new hearth is also built for the fire in the hut of the feast's patron.

During the whole time of the *dikṣa* the feast's patron and his first wife must fast and observe other regulations as well (291).

Under various formal ceremonies *soma*[17] is purchased and the plants are solemnly deposited on a royal throne. On the next morning the rising sun is venerated with libations, and further sacrifices follow (308-13). Then a *soma* celebration is held with a complicated ritual which lasts three days (359). On the second day of this celebration mares are shown to the sacred horse to make it neigh. The neighing is taken as a sacred song (435-6).

In various groups 609 victims are now dedicated, that is, first two groups of eleven animals each (mostly he-goats), then the three main victims to be slain with the horse: a horse, a hornless he-goat and a gayal. Twelve other animals, mostly he-goats, and a sterile cow are added and also dedicated to *Prajāpati*. Then 312 domestic animals, mostly goats and sheep of various colour and bulls of different age, are dedicated for the great sacrifice which is soon to be performed. It is succeeded by the dedication of 260 wild animals (442).

After a hymn praising the sacred horse (444) it is with three other horses yoked to a gold-studded war chariot. The feast's patron drives in warlike attire, with a bow in his hand, on this war chariot to a pond in the east of the sacrificial place and is leading the horses into the water of the pond till it reaches their rumps (449).

After the return to the sacrificial place the sacred horse is disyoked and anointed with clarified butter by the three first wives of the feast's patron (449-53). Then the mane and tail of the horse are decorated with 101 pearls[18] while pronouncing the three sacred words *bhuḥ* (earth), *bhubaḥ* (atmosphere), and *svaḥ* (sky). Then the horse is served the remains of the sacrifices of the previous day as food. If it does not eat, the remains of the offerings are thrown into the water (456-7).

## The Sacrifice

Now two of the four main priests hold a dialogue in riddles about certain religious truths of an esoteric nature. Then the sacred horse is sprinkled with water under many prayers (479). At last it is killed by the priests through suffocation (496).

However, it is not clearly indicated in which manner the horse is strangled[19]. But the consent of the victim to its sacrifice is required: it should be a voluntary death (496). For this reason the victim is "soothed" until it consents to its death.

The dead horse is laid in such a position that its legs point to the north, its head to the east or west. After the sacrifice of the sacred horse all the other dedicated 349 domestic animals are sacrificed, but the wild animals are released into the jungle (500).

Now the four main wives and a young daughter of the feast's patron approach with their 400 companions and bring water in jugs for an ablution. The four main wives of the king address the dead horse with endearing words; among other words which they use they call the horse 'mother'. Then the women walk nine times around the dead horse. Then all its openings through which the "life spirit" may have escaped are bathed (505), its mouth, nose, eyes, ears, navel, penis, anus and legs. The other victims are bathed in the same manner.

After that the *mahiṣi* must lie down near the dead horse and under a blanket try to have coitus with the horse, while the priests with the other women and the daughter of the feast's patron exchange obscenities (507-22). Through this dialogue they believe to gain the fulfilment of all their desires (523).

The three-first wives of the feast's patron then indicate with golden needles each the spots at which the body of the horse should be cut open with a knife and divided (526). This is then carried out while the sacrificing priest is reciting some prayers (527). The dead horse is cut up according to certain traditional rules. Anxious care is taken not to break any bones (444, 492). Then follows a complicated manipulation with the omentum of the other victims, while in place of the omentum of the main victim its intestinal fat is used, for it was apparently believed that the sacred horse had no omentum (529).

After that more prayers are recited and oblations offered and ultimately a dialogue is held between the two main priests in question and answer about philosophical and esoteric problems which at that time occupied the minds of the Brahmans (540)[20].

Then a priest offers twice from a golden cup *soma* to Prajāpati (551) after which the bags for the intestines of the other victims are sacrificed (553). Ultimately the sacred horse is cut up with gold-studded knives and the parts are offered to various deities (588)[21]. 131 different parts are sacrificed (589). These sacrifices are succeeded by as many oblations.

On the evening the blood of the sacred victim is sacrificed; it is poured into the fire from a hoof of the sacred horse itself (593). Then the sacrificial dinner is served: all eat the flesh of the horse, roasted on the spit.

### The Conclusion of the Three Days' Sacrificial Feast

The whole feast is concluded with a general bath in the pond to which all attending guests proceed in procession. The patron of the feast steps first into the water.

Then a butter oblation is performed to *Varuṇa*, on the head of a leper. In accordance with the *Śānkhāyana Śrauta* (16, 18, 18-20) the man must be purchased for a thousand cows; he should be a white, yellow-skinned, wrinkled, deformed by moles, leprous[22], crippled, important Brahman of the Atri clan. Such a man is selected because allegedly *Varuṇa* manifests himself in the shape of a leper[23]: with reddish-yellow eyes, with a bald head, a white, shining skin (647). They lead this man to the river, drag him into the water till it flows into his mouth, then the priest offers on his head horse-blood. After this the man is taken out of the river and released. The patron of the feast and his wives take a bath, after them the priests and all the others who attended the feast. Also all objects which came into contact with *soma* are thrown into the water. Then the patron of the feast and his first wife dress in new garments (650).

When all have taken their bath, criminals are brought to the pond. As a result of the horse sacrifice they are now delivered of the rest of their punishment (651).

Further butter offerings and a bloody sacrifice of 21 sterile cows follows (655-61). After that the feast's patron distributes, with other precious gifts, his four main wives, his young daughter, with all lady companions among the priests with whom they had exchanged obscenities. Often only the companions of the king's wives are actually handed over to the priests (662).

## Ceremonies of the Subsequent Twelve Days after the Sacrifice

On the subsequent twelve days the feast's patron must daily offer a cake to *Agni*, the god of fire, and prepare a rice broth for the four main priests (665).

There follows an oblation of rice liquor which had been prepared in a special manner. Then again animals are sacrificed (666-78).

Also during the following year six times at the beginning of the six seasons a bloody sacrifice of six animals must be performed (679).

The detailed account of the Indo-Aryan horse sacrifice as described here is recorded in the White Yajurveda[24].

There is also a description of the *Aśvamedha* in the Black Yajurveda, but it is less precise, though in a general outline it agrees completely with the description given in the White Yajurveda[25]. The *Ramāyana* describes the *Aśvamedha* feast in a similar manner.

## THE *AŚVAMEDHA* ACCORDING TO THE *MAHABHARATA* AND *RAMĀYANA*

The *Mahabharata* describes an *Aśvamedha* feast which was performed by King Yudhisthira to purify himself from the crime of killing his own relatives (375-90). This horse sacrifice excelled in phantastic splendour and lavish generosity of the feast's patron who, however, gained the means for such wasteful prodigality through a fortunate treasure found in the Himalaya mountains.

### A Description of the *Aśvamedha* Feast follows in a General Outline

A white (according to the *Mahabharata*) or a black (according to the *Ramāyana*) horse, or a white horse with black spots (according to the Satyayajñi) was selected under various ceremonies for the sacrifice. In the month of *Chait* (March) the horse was released to wander about and it returned in the following year at the time of beginning spring. The horse was free to wander wherever it pleased and it was even fed if it reached a region where grazing was scanty. The horse was guarded by four hundred noblemen to prevent any harm coming to the horse; it was not allowed to step into a river, or to cover a mare. No one was allowed to mount the sacred horse. It had to be a young stallion without blemish.

After a year, when the horse had returned, the patron of the feast, usually a king or at least a chief, went to his field and ploughed it, while his wife followed him and sowed into the furrows seeds of every kind of vegetables and curative herbs which grew in the kingdom. Then the horse was bathed, anointed and decorated with rich ornaments. Three times it was led around the altar which had been erected on the ploughed field. The sacrifice was performed in honour of *Prajāpati*, the lord of the creation; but in an earlier time in honour of Indra, and still earlier in honour of *Varuṇa*, the ancient Indian high and sky god. A countless number of representative animals were sacrificed before the sacred horse was slain.

Finally the rain drum was beaten and the trumpet sounded, and the feast's patron with his wife sprinkled with holy water. Then the sacred horse was strangled. As soon as the horse had expired, the wife of the feast's patron had to lie under a cover with the dead horse and try coitus with it, allegedly to reconcile the victim with its cruel fate. The men and women who attended the ceremony meanwhile sang obscene songs.

When the sacrificed horse was cut up, great care was taken not to break any of its bones. The flesh was cooked and eaten at the sacrificial dinner, pieces of it were thrown into the fire burning on the altar. The bones were buried or burned on the altar. Then herb offerings were distributed among the festive crowd; what remained over was burned. The participants of the feast were lavishly entertained and liberally treated with intoxicating drinks (*soma, sura*).[26]

## A HUMAN SACRIFICE ACCORDING TO THE *ŚĀNKHĀYANA ŚRAUTA*

According to J.A. Dubois[27] other animals could be substituted by the Vedic Indians for the horse: a cow (*gomedha*), an elephant (*rajasuya*) or a human being (*naramedha* or *puruśamedha*).

The human sacrifice is described in the *Śāṅkhāyana Srauta*[28]. According to this description the *puruśamedha* (of four days) is a superior form of sacrifice than the *Aśvamedha*, which lasts only three days. What cannot be achieved through the *Aśvamedha* is granted by the performance of the *puruśamedha*; it is thus an intensification of the *Aśvamedha*, an improvement on it.

The ceremonies of the *Naramedha* are roughly the same as those of the *Aśvamedha*:

A Brahman is bought for the price of a thousand cows and a hundred horses. But in the place of a Brahman also a Kshattriya could be substituted. The man selected for sacrifice was free to wander about after the manner of the sacred horse. But he was watched by 400 noblemen. All his desires were fulfilled, only his chastity must not be broken.

After a year had passed, the sacrifice took place. On the second day of the feast the human victim was sacrificed together with a *gomṛiga* and a hornless goat to *Prajāpati*. Besides these three main victims a great number of other animals were also sacrificed.

The human victim was adorned with various ornaments, then he had to smell the place where the litanies (*āstāva*) were to be recited; probably he had to kiss the place. Then he was dedicated in the same manner as the sacred horse and finally a red cloth was thrown over him woven of *kuśa* grass. Under this cover he was strangled. At the Vedic sacrifice most victims seem to have been strangled or killed by a blow behind the ear.

As soon as the victim was dead, the Udgātar addressed him with a song dedicated to the spirit of the dead, *Yama*, and the Hotar recited for him a litany called *puruśa nārāyana*. Then one after the other all four high priests addressed two verses each at the victim. It was believed that the organiser of the sacrifice was forgiven all his sins through the recitation of these verses and various hymns.

After that the same ceremonies had to be performed as in the ritual of the *Aśvamedha*: the first wife of the king had to lie with the corpse and stick his penis into her vulva. Both were covered with a mantle while this took place. The organiser of the feast had to shout obscenities at his wife during this time, just as it was done in the *Aśvamedha*. At the same time the priests and the other three main wives of the king exchanged obscenities. Then there was a dialogue of questions and answers between the priests on esoteric problems. This dialogue was called *brahmodyam*.

It is not known how frequently a human victim was substituted for the horse. But according to an ancient tradition (*cf. Śatapatha Brāhmana* 1, 2, 3, 6) the human sacrifice is older than the horse sacrifice: "The gods accepted in the beginning man as a victim. Later the ability to be sacrificed (*medha*) left him and went into the horse. The gods accepted the horse, but the ability to be sacrificed also left the horse and entered the cattle. And so forth, it was transferred from cattle to sheep, from sheep to goat, and from the goat into the earth. Digging the gods searched the earth and found the ability to be sacrificed in the barley and in the rice. Therefore so much power which before was in the sacrificial victims, is now in the sacrificial cakes of rice or barley ready for the taking by him who has knowledge of it. The grains ground in the mill are like the hairs of the sacrificial victim; the water poured on the flour is like their skin, the mixing like the flesh; the baked dough like their bones, the laying on of the sacrificial fat like the marrow. Thus the five essential parts of the animal are contained in the sacrificial cake.[29]

## THE *AŚVAMEDHA* ACCORDING TO ABBÉ DUBOIS AMONG THE HINDUS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In the post-Vedic time this grandiose sacrifice became increasingly rare, as the enormous expense of such a feast made its frequent performance impossible. The famous Catholic missionary Abbé J.A. Dubois, who lived in India from 1792 to 1823 and who left in a great work a very sound and detailed description of Hindu culture and religion, mentions that reliable persons had assured him that at the beginning of the past century (the eighteenth) the king of Amber (Jaipur), in Upper India had performed the horse sacrifice with utmost splendour. The gift which he made to his high priest alone is said to have been worth a lakh (100,000) Rupees! The other Brahmans who attended the feast to the number of several thousands, all received presents proportionate to their rank.

It was usual, says Abbé Dubois further, when the solemnities of the *yagnam* (sacrifice) were over, for the prince on whose behalf it had been celebrated, to seat himself on a high throne for the duration of 48 minutes, and during that time the Brahmins present were permitted to ask him for anything they pleased. And the prince, on his part, was bound to satisfy their demands, however extravagant, even to the extent of all his kingdom, his wife, and all other things he cherished most. If he failed to satisfy a single of the numerous requests, the effects of the sacrifice would have been nil.[30]

In the following pages I shall condense the description of this sacrifice by the Abbé, as it was performed in a somewhat modified form in his time. He called this sacrifice *yagnam*. It was exclusively reserved to Brahmins who lived as hermits in the forests and were called *vanaprastha*.

"There was only one occasion on which the *Vanaprasthas* could, without scruple, deprive a living creature of existence; it was when they made the famous sacrifice of *yagnam*, which is still held in great honour among modern Brahmins (modern at the time of the Abbé!). A ram is the victim usually offered: but such is the horror with which they regard the shedding of blood, that they either beat the animal to death or strangle it, instead of slaughtering it.[31] Latter-day Brahmins, however, are not all agreed about the lawfulness of this sacrifice. The *Vaishnavas* regard it as an abominable practice, in which they obstinately refuse to participate. They maintain that it is an innovation of much more recent date than their ancient religious laws, and that it is contrary to the most sacred and inviolable rule which forbids murder under any form and for any reason whatsoever. This doctrine of the *Vaishnavas* is one of the chief reasons why they are accused of heresy by other Brahmins.[32]

The sacrifice of the *yagnam* is, in the opinion of its advocates, the most meritorious sacrifice that can be performed. It is considered extremely acceptable to the gods; and the person who offers it, or causes it to be offered, may count on abundant temporal blessings and on the entire remission of the sins which he has committed for a hundred generations. Nothing less than such advantages was necessary to determine the Brahmins to overcome the horror with which the destruction of a living creature inspired them. Furthermore, Brahmins possess the exclusive privilege of performing this sacrifice. Other castes may not even be present at it; though by a special grace they are authorised to provide the means of carrying it out. The expenses that it necessitates are very considerable, for crowds of Brahmins attend the solemnity, and each one must receive a present from the person who offers *yagnam*—a circumstance which suggests that it is not so much devotion as interest that takes them there. However this sacrifice is rarely offered, few people being able or willing to bear the great cost which it entails. The following are the principal ceremonies which are observed:

The person who is going to preside at the *yagnam* announces the day fixed for the sacrifice throughout the whole district, and invites all Brahmins to attend. It is necessary that Brahmins of each of the four *Vedas* should be present; if a representative of each of these classes does not appear, the solemnity must be put off. Neither Sudras, whatever their rank may be, nor Brahmins who are infirm or diseased, or blind or lame, etc., nor Brahmins who are widowers, may be present at it.

A ram is chosen after undergoing the most minute inspection. It must be perfectly white, about three years of age, in good condition and well proportioned in every respect.[33] A *purohita* (priest) proclaims the favourable moment when the ceremony can begin, and the assembled Brahmins, who sometimes number over two thousand, hasten to the appointed spot. A hole is first dug; and after the *homam*[34] and other ordinary preliminaries, a large fire is lighted and is kept burning by logs of wood cut from the sacred trees *aswatta, alai, icham, porasu*, and by a great quantity of *darbha* grass. The whole is drenched with *ghee*, which causes the flames to rise to a great height. In the meanwhile the *purohita* recites *mantrams* in a loud voice, scraps of which are loudly repeated by the spectators. The ram is then brought into the midst of the assembly, rubbed with oil, put in a bath, and then stained with *akshatas*. The body and horns are garlanded with flowers, and cords made of *darbha* grass are tied, or rather tightly bound, round the animal. All the time the *purohita* is repeating *mantrams*, the supposed object of which is to kill the victim. This obviously inadequate proceeding, however, is supplemented by closing the nostrils, ears, and mouth of the animal while the Brahmins present deal heavy blows on the beast, and finally one of them suffocates it by pressing his knee on its throat. The *purohita* and his attendants meanwhile repeat *mantrams* in a loud voice, and these are supposed to ensure a quick and painless death for the victim. It would be a very inauspicious omen if the ram uttered the slightest cry while it was enduring these tortures.[35]

As soon as the animal has expired, the Brahmin who presides at the ceremony cuts open the stomach and tears out the entrails along with the fat. Those he holds suspended over the fire, the fat dropping into it as it melts. At the same time liquefied butter is poured over the fire as a libation.

The victim is skinned and hacked to pieces which are then fried in butter. A portion is thrown into the fire as an oblation, while the rest is divided between the Brahmin who has presided at the sacrifice and the patron of the feast. They, in turn, distribute their portions among the Brahmins present, who scramble wildly for the scraps and devour them as something sacred and auspicious. This is particularly remarkable, because it is the only occasion on which the Brahmins may, without committing sin, eat of that which has had life or the germ of life.

They then offer to the fire, as *neiveddya*, boiled and raw rice, the latter husked and well washed.

All these ceremonies and a great number of others[36] being over, betel, which has previously been placed all round the fire is distributed to the Brahmins. Finally, the person who has borne the expense of the sacrifice makes gifts, in money and clothes, to all present, according to the rank and dignity of each; a costly munificence, considering the multitude of those who take part in the ceremony.

The Brahmin who had presided at the *yagnam* is henceforth considered an important personage. He has acquired, for instance, the right of keeping a perpetual fire burning in his house. If this fire, by some accident, were to go out, he would be forced to rekindle it, not with light procured from a flint, but with that produced by rubbing two pieces of dry wood together. When a Brahmin of this dignity status dies, his funeral pyre must be lighted from this fire. But then the perpetual fire in his house is allowed to die out by itself.

I have never been able to discover—says Abbé

Dubois—whether this sacrifice has any particular divinity as its object. It would appear, however, that the Brahmin who offers it is free to dedicate it to any god that he chooses, provided the deity be one of the first rank. Be this as it may, the fire of the *yagnam* bears the name of *agni iswara*, which means the god of fire, as if it were offered to this element only.[37]

Hindu books testify that this sacrifice was much more frequent in the time of the old *vanaprasthas*; but then it was performed in a much simpler manner, and was not accompanied with the foolish ostentation that was afterwards associated with it.[38]

## SUMMARY

The most significant points in this horse or ram sacrifice are the following :

1. The victim receives an esoteric significance: it is identified with the creator, at times with the sun, or with death.
2. The sacrifice is addressed to a first-class deity, to *Prajāpati*, in earlier times to Indira, or even *Varuṇa*, or to *Yama*.
3. In Vedic times this sacrifice was reserved to the kings, in later times to the Brahmins. But persons of lower social status could act as patrons of the sacrifice by paying the heavy expenses.
4. The purpose of the sacrifice was fertility in family, field and stable, the acquisition of more power, the well-being of one's subjects, the remission of sin. It was occasionally also performed at the death of a king to send the horse along with him into the other world.
5. Usually the sacrifice took place in spring.
6. The victim was a male horse, young, without blemish, of special colour, white, with black spots; in later time a ram.
7. The priests were Brahmins. The patron of the sacrifice did not perform any sacrifice himself.
8. The place of sacrifice was outside the town.

9. The horse or ram was specially dedicated for the sacrifice.
10. The horse was released and allowed to wander about for a specified period of time. The horse was guarded against any harm; it must not cover a mare nor go into water.
11. The actual sacrifice is preceded by sacrifices of minor victims, often in considerable number.
12. There is a special initiation ceremony for the patron of the feast.
13. Intoxicants (*soma*) play an important role in the ritual of sacrifice.
14. A number of other victims are dedicated to accompany the sacred horse into the other world, and will therefore be sacrificed with it.
15. Immediately before the sacrifice the sacrificial victim is bathed and decked out with ornaments.
16. The victim is killed by suffocation, or a blow against the head.
17. The death should be "voluntary".
18. The wife of the feasts patron has to attempt coitus with the dead victim. During the ceremony obscenities are exchanged between the priests and the women.
19. The principle of life is believed to be in the breath of the victim.
20. When the victim is cut up, care is taken not to break any bones.
21. The omentum of the victim plays an important part in the ritual. And its blood is specially offered to the deity.
22. A sacrificial dinner is prepared in which all participants at the sacrifice dine of the flesh of the victim.
23. The sacrifice of a leprous Brahmin, wherever it is performed, has obviously the significance of offering a scape goat. Sins are washed off in the sacred pond in which the participants at the *Aśvamedha* bathe.
24. The priests and guests receive lavish presents from the feast's patron.

## NOTES

1. H. Oldenberg, 1923, 1.
2. In the description of the *Aśvamedha* I follow in essentials, P.E. Dumont, 1927. Dumont describes the horse sacrifice after the *Śrautasūtra* of Katyana and the *Vājasaneyisamhita* and the *Śatapathabrāhmana* of the White Yajurveda. The numbers in brackets in the text refer to the numbers in Dumont's book.
3. It is also said that the earth is its mother and the sky its father.
4. *Cf. Ṛgveda* I, 163 (K.F. Geldner, 1923, 203 f.).
5. W. Koppers, 1936, 362.
6. The *Vishnu Purana* (*Cf.* F. Hall's edition of H.H. Wilson's *Vishnu Purana*, 1864, III, 289-303) tells us of a sacred horse which Sagara, the mythical ancestor of the South-Indian *Uppiliyan*, dedicated and which kidnapped him into the nether-world.
7. *Cf.*, D.A. Mackenzie, w.d., 93.
8. P.E. Dumont, 1927, 249 (10).
9. J.A. Dubois, 1928, 514.
10. H. Oldenberg, 1923, 12.
11. Mahiṣi really means 'buffalo cow' or also 'wife of the buffalo god'. We shall see later why the woman is called by this name.
12. According to the Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra (20, 3) it is the son of the younger sister of the feast's patron's father who fetches the dog, or the son of the younger sister of the feast's patron's mother (Dumont, 250, 7).
13. Thus the north-east is called in the Rajasuya ritual (consecration of a king). *Cf.*, H. Weber, 1883, 141.
14. H. Oldenberg, 1923, 175 supplies this detail.
15. Saccharum Munja (*Cf.* C. Chakraberty, 85), a rush grass.
16. W. Koppers (1936, 360) believes to find in this rite a symbolic reference to the incestuous relation of Prajāpati with his daughter in the shape of a black antilope. But it is more likely that the investment in a black antilope skin signifies the fact that the Feast's patron assumes during the duration of the feast the role of a *sanyasin* (celibatary Hindu monk). Even at present time Hindu ascetics use to sit in meditation on an antilope skin.
17. *Soma* is a dark, milky, sour and fleshy creeper of whose juice an intoxicant was prepared. *Cf.* C. Chakraberty, 85; G. Oppert, 1905, 196.
18. According to the Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra (20, 15) each of the four wives of the king should hang 1000 pearls around the neck of the sacred horse. *Cf.* Dumont, 1927, 271 (9 and 10).
19. According to the Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra the horse is strangled with a woollen or linen cloth, the other victims with a string. *Cf.* Dumont, 275 (9). A. Hillebrandt thinks it was smothered under clothes (1897, 152).
20. Such dialogues of question and answer are popular in India even in present time.

21. *Cf. Ṛgveda* I, 161 (K.F. Geldner, 1923, I, 200 *f.*).
22. It is not stated whether the "leper" suffered of leucodermia only. This disease only destroys the pigment of the skin but leaves the body hale. Actual lepra which makes the skin not exactly white, but shining, also destroys the skin and deforms the body. According to the description given above the man could be an albino of whom it could be said with more justice that he has reddish-yellow eyes, than of a leper. In the description of the sacrifice it is not stated whether the man is really drowned, but it is probable.
23. It is interesting to note that according to a myth of the Asura (iron smelters of the Munda) the supreme god Sing Bonga came as a boy covered with itch into the world and purified himself in the fire of the smelting furnace. He came from the furnace, "shining like the morning sun, covered with silver and gold." *Cf.* S.C. Roy, 1912, II, XX, f. and J. Hoffmann and A. van Emelen, 1930, 240-50 and 1648 f.
24. *Cf.* Dumont, 1927, 1-241.
25. *Cf.*, Dumont, 1927, 243-373.
26. *Cf.* D.A. Mackenzie, w.d., 93
27. J.A. Dubois, 1928, 514.
28. *Cf.* A. Weber, 1873, 269 f.
29. *Cf.* also: *Aitareya Brāhmana*, 2, 8, resp. 6, 8.
30. J.A. Dubois, 1928, 513.
31. Abbé Dubois naturally could not know that this manner of killing is an ancient and world-wide usage, as proved later.
32. The editor of Abbé Dubois' book adds that the *yagnam* is still performed in South India by the Vadakalais though they are Vaishnavas.
33. The editor of Dubois' book adds that Dubois is mistaken: the victim must be perfectly black. It is usually presented by the shepherds as a free gift.
34. At a *hom* sacrifice liquefied butter is poured into the fire.
35. The editor adds that it is believed that if the victim utters a sound the family of the Brahmin who offers the *yagnam* will gradually become extinct.
36. What a pity that Abbé Dubois has so lightly dismissed to mention these ceremonies!
37. Among the modern Hindus *Agni* is the god of the earth fire and of the family.
38. J.A. Dubois, 1928, 510-13.

# 2

# PARALLELS TO THE *AŚVAMEDHA* HORSE SACRIFICE

## AMONG THE NORTH-ASIATIC SHEPHERD NOMADS

ALL along the frozen lands of northern Siberia from Scandinavia in the west to the extreme east of Asia, primitive hunting tribes and animal breeders, reindeer herders, horse breeders and breeders of other animals inhabit these forbidden lands. The most primitive among them may be the Samoyeds, Tungus, Gilyaks, Woguls, Aleuts and Ainus. These tribes may not be voluntary settlers of these uninviting lands, frozen over most of the year, but pushed into them by other peoples in search of a living space. They may have enjoyed a higher standard of culture, but in present time they are forced by the cold climate and the lack of vegetation to a nomadic life either as hunters and fishermen, or as reindeer or horse breeders.

Since vegetable food is unavailable except for a few short months, meat food is all-important. Thus animals, either as tame or as herd animals, occupy almost exclusively the attention of these tribes. For if a hunter is not able to kill an animal for food or if the herd of a breeder is wiped out by an epidemic or by drought, their life is endangered. It is thus only natural that the animal plays an important role also in the religion of these tribes. In fact a function of the Supreme God of these tribes, that of taking care of the amimals, becomes in some religions so important that a new God comes into evidence, "Lord of the Animals", who may even push the High

God into obscurity and usurp his role. This bush and game spirit naturally assumes the disguise of an animal, hunted by the tribes, bear, tiger or eagle. In the arctic zone, in North Asia and North America, the tribes perform annually or after a certain period of time a solemn sacrifice. This sacrifice is surrounded with many impressive ceremonies: there is a dedication ceremony when a young bear, for instance, is caught and selected for the sacrifice as victim. The deity is believed to take possession of the animal. It is indeed believed that the "Lord of Animals" himself takes his abode in the sacrificial victim and is "incarnated" in it. Thus the victim receives divine honours and is treated exceptionally well by the hunters. But finally it is sacrificed with peculiar propitiatory rites after which a common meal follows. The skull and bones of the victim are treated with special reverence, either exposed on a platform or carefully buried in the ground. The sacrifice is accompanied by dances and pantomimes in animal masks, often with scenes of an erotic nature, and has the purpose of increasing the fertility of wild game. Of this type is the famous bear sacrifice of the Ainus and several other Siberian tribes, the reindeer and horse sacrifice of tribes in Inner Asia, and the buffalo sacrifice of the Red Indians of North America.

The essence of this sacrifice consists in a solemn sending-off of the bush god or spirit into the other world as a messenger for the purpose of providing game for the hunters. The "Lord of Animals" is supposed to send them all the game which they need for their sustenance. It is in fact a kind of mystery play in which the animal victim is treated like a god, as the bringer of salvation and provider of food for the whole tribal community.

Lehtisalo describes the reindeer sacrifice of the Yurak-Samoyeds as follows: "The forest Yurak sacrifice to *Num* (sky-god) a white reindeer, bull or oxen if *Num* wants such an animal. On demand of the shaman such an animal is dedicated to *Num* already as a calf and is then let loose as "spirit of the herd". If it is not sacrificed to *Num* after seven years when it has grown fat it dies by itself."[1] Elsewhere he writes that the dedicated animal is marked by cutting into its coat at its left side a long line.[2]

Human beings too can be dedicated to the sky-god in the same manner: When children get sick the shaman may dedicate them to the *Num* or sky-god so that they might get well. Such children, after reaching maturity, may not marry; for if they marry they are believed to lose their life somehow soon. They are, however, never sacrificed.[3]

The sacrifice usually takes place on hills and mountains. The reindeer is strangled with its head turned eastwards. While laying the string around the neck of the victim, the shaman grips its left hind leg and prays with a loud voice: "*Num*, we give you now our reindeer. Take it!" The victim's flesh is eaten raw and its head with the bones is exposed on a board fixed on top of a pole. The head is placed in such a direction that its snout points eastward. All attending the feast turn devoutly towards the east and bow down several times.[4]

It can be stated that in general the Samoyeds on the Jenissey kill all animals by strangulation; it is considered sinful to kill by any other manner and is believed to call illness on the offender.[5]

The Tungus too perform a similar sacrifice. They sacrifice a male horse or a reindeer. J.G. Georgi gives an account of a horse dedication among the Tungus: Horse and reindeer Tungus sometimes call a shaman to dedicate some animals to the gods to make the herds prosper. Such a dedicated animal is marked with a red piece of cloth or at the ears.[6] The same usage prevails among the Baikal-Tungus. They too put specially dedicated horses temporarily or permanently out of use. At the dedication ceremony these animals are bathed in milk. The reindeer-breeders among the Tungus, of course, dedicate instead of a horse a reindeer. Such animals may never be sold, given away or slaughtered.

The Turco-Tatars too prefer white or at least light-coloured horses for sacrifice. They sacrifice them to Uelgön, the white primeval father.[7]

The Lamutes of Kamchatka celebrate a spring festival at which a reindeer is killed by a stab into the heart with a spear. The head, and attached to it the skin of the victim, are hung on a scaffold erected of some long poles. The sacrifice is performed in the hope to be successful on future hunting expeditions. After the sacrifice, the reindeer is cut up, its meat boiled and eaten in a sacrificial dinner. Then a race on reindeer sleds is held, after that a wrestling match. In the evening another festive banquet is provided when plenty of tea and liquor are served.[8]

The East Cheremiss too sacrifice horses in the same manner.[9]

### AMONG THE TURK TRIBES

The Altai Turks (Cumandins) perform the sacrifice of horses or reindeer in spring before the birches regain their leaves[10]. The deity to whom this sacrifice is addressed is Uelhän, also Orä, the heavenly, supreme Turhan Sultahan.

A. Anochin relates that each head of the family performs a similar sacrifice to Uelhän in the first year of his marriage so that the clan deity might take the new family under its protection. The Cumandins express the purpose of the sacrifice in the following terse words: One prays for life, for health, for the herds that all should prosper.

The sacrifice is performed very early in spring when the cuckoo calls for the first time. The birch trees should still be without leaves when the sacrifice is held.

The place of sacrifice is somewhat apart from the village in a clearing of the forest. The owner of the horse chosen as victim leads it by its rein at the head of a crowd of riders to the place of sacrifice. The sacrificial horse may not be ridden; it should be a young animal unused by a rider. It should be of light colour, cream-coloured, light-red, reddish-brown, light-grey, light-brown, with a bright tail and mane. It may be a young stallion or a mare (without however having yet given birth to a young one), but never a castrated animal.

The sacrificial rite is as follows: The owner of the victim horse first gives it a bath in the river and then ties it to a birch tree. Usually many-coloured ribbons are plaited into the mane of the horse. Then all men present help in making the sacrificial vessels and implements out of birch wood and bark. Finally the shaman blows smoke towards all attending the feast.

At night the shaman carries out an exorcism by means of his magic drum. Then all take a little rest. Early in the morning, at dawn, the sacrifice takes place. The owner of the sacrificial horse hands it over to another man to strangle it. First the men tie ropes to the four fetlocks of the horse, then all men divided in four groups take up a rope and pull it in a different direction. Thus the legs of the horse are stretched into different directions and it falls on its belly. Now the man to whom the owner of the horse had entrusted the horse places a ring plaited of strings on the mouth of the horse, squeezes a birch-stick in and turns the ring so tight that the animal soon dies of suffocation. When the horse is dead, its skin is slit at the belly and all hands help to draw the skin from the horse's body. The skin of the head and of the extremities up to the knee is not removed. Genitalia and entrails (with heart, lungs, liver and spleen) are placed in the skin.[11]

The skin is nowadays no more exposed on a birch, but deliberately cut into small pieces, because in the past the Russian colonists had often removed the skins from the birches on which they had been hung and used them for their own purposes. The flesh of the sacrificial victim is boiled in big caldrons. But the bones may not be broken or split.

The sacrificial horse may not be stabbed, but strangled in order to retain its soul. For it is the task of the shaman during his exorcism to offer the soul to the deity.

As soon as the sacrificial meat is cooked, the Cumandians stick the skin of the sacrificed horse, with head and extremities attached, on a long birch pole. First they sew the skin together at the belly, fill the cavity with the entrails and inner organs of the horse, fetch a long thin birch pole and stick its upper end through the hole under the tail, push it through until it gets stuck in the neck vertebra attached to the head. Then the pole is placed upright aside a birch tree for support. Its lower end rests on the ground; a few short posts are hammered into the ground to give it a firm footing. The head of the horse points eastwards.[12]

After that the shaman performs an offering: with a scoop he throws small pieces of meat upwards. Then a dinner is served at which all those attending the feast take part. Then the bones of the sacrificial horse are intertwained with birch twigs and exposed on an altar on the west-side of the birch-pole carrying the skin and head of the horse. Also the sacrificial vessels and implements are exposed on a special platform. At least this was the custom until Russian colonists interfered.

In the evening of the day of sacrifice a ceremony takes place which bears a strong erotic character. Three young men with masks before the face tie a phallus carved of birch wood in front of their belly and begin a dance. They gallop "like a stallion" and during their dance stick the phallus into the right armpit of the attending guests or, according to other informers, even between their legs. Women and girls are not permitted to witness this dance.[13]

In some modified form the same erotic dance is performed also among the Teleuts. Zelenin believes that through this ritual the men receive their generative power.

The whole sacrifice appears to be a clan institution. Thus the women who naturally come from other clans are not permitted to attend these ceremonies. Children and virgins may not attend the sacrifice, but participate in the subsequent sacrificial dinner. But it must be admitted that for them usually only a cup of soup is left over.

About the horse sacrifice of the Telenget in the Central Altai region we have a detailed description by W. Amschler[14]. He writes :

"Among the Siberian races whose world outlook is formed by shamanism we find everywhere animal sacrifices. The animal sacrifices of the Telenget residing in the southern Altai region must be judged from their attitude to the principle of the good, which they call *Uligen*, and to that of evil, *Erlik*. A series of spirits are subject to each of these two powers . . . The principle of the good is venerated, while *Erlik* is supplicated and propitiated through sacrifices. The sacrifice can have two forms, one bloody, the other unbloody. Only domestic animals are sacrificed in the first form, the horse being the main victim, though also rams and goats are sacrificed. Unbloody offerings consist usually of millet beer which is consumed in large quantities . . .".

Sacrifices to *Uligen* are rare, for he is anyhow good. But every adult Telenget should after getting married offer a bloody sacrifice to *Uligen* (iik). It consists of a horse of light colour; *Uligen* prefers light-brown horses. Once the horse has been dedicated to *Uligen*, it receives special veneration. A red ribbon is plaited into its mane and women may not use this sacred animal.

It is usually spring-time or harvest-time when this sacrifice is performed. A birch grove is the usual spot for the sacrifice.

The sacrifice is carried out in the following manner:

"The first preparatory rite is performed in the evening after sun-down. The men first choose a proper place for the sacrifice and select the right animal for the offering. A new house (*yurt*) is erected and covered with skins and carpets. Inside the *yurt* a green birch is erected, its stump about 18 cm. thick at its base. Its top pierces through the centre of the tapering roof of the *yurt*. The lower branches are cut, but those on top are left intact like a broom. In place of a flag a strip of linen is attached to the top of the birch . . . As already mentioned, the *yurt* is specially built for this purpose and is usually larger than the ordinary *yurts*. The door is on its eastern side. In front of it they place a kind of nest made of birch bark; it represents the enclosure for cattle. The side facing the door remains open, like a gate. There is placed a sling consisting of birch sticks with a loop of horse hair on top. Then the victim is selected from among several horses of light colour. But there is no special dedication nor a release of the victim into liberty, at least for a stipulated time."

After various ceremonies of the shaman, which symbolise the chase and capture of the horse selected for sacrifice, the horse is indeed sacrificed on a lonely spot. It happens in this way:

"The horse is positioned with its head towards east. Its mouth is tied with a rope, and a rope is tied to each of its fetlocks. A stout beam is placed on its back. While some men press the heavy beam down, others pull at the legs of the victim in four directions. They do it by repeated jerks. Thus they break the back of the horse. Then they cover all the openings of the horse so that no blood may escape.

"When the horse has expired, it is skinned. The feet up to the knee and the head are not separated from the skin. Only later, when the skin has decomposed and the bare bones remain over, the skull is hung into a tree. In some places the tongue of the victim is also torn out, in other places this is not done. No knife is used in skinning the victim, only the fist or a piece of wood. This precaution is taken because the skin should not be torn. The loose skin is hung on a birch pole which is called *tjukele* and is about ten yards long. The thin end of this birch pole is tapered and pushed through the skin between the hind legs into the skull. On the west side of the sacrificial table (*taskaka*) a birch post is rammed into the ground, about 20 cm. thick at its base. At the top it is gabled. The pole *tjukele* and the *baidera* (the skin with the skull and the fetlocks of the horse) are fixed into the gabled end of the post, at the height of about 3 m. For *Uligen* the head of the horse points to an eastern direction, for *Erlik* into a western direction. The lower end of the post is fixed in the ground in such a way that the *baidera* is hanging just over the sacrificial table. Later a fire is lighted just below the *baidera*, and the sacrificial meat is cooked on this fire in a huge caldron. Vapours and smoke thus arise over the *baidera* until they reach *Uligen*."

After that the sacrificial meat is cut into small pieces, the ligaments are cut, but not the bones. A part of the meat is distributed raw, the other part is boiled. The god images in the *yurt* are sprinkled with soup. Then a banquet is held and the sacrificial meat consumed. But the bones remain all on the spot and after their cleansing from all meat they are placed unharmed on the altar. Finally they are covered with brushwood and with the *baidera* left to decompose.

On the second evening the shaman again distributes pieces of meat of the sacrificial horse. Then he performs various ceremonies and purifies the patron of the feast from "any harm caused by *Erlik*". A series of other ceremonies follow. But they are unessential additions to the sacrifice proper.

On the third day a drinking bout is arranged. Immense vessels of birch bark up to the height of a man filled with a *kumys* and *airan* curd, *abyrtku*, and *ale* are drunk.

At present the offerings of the Yakuts consist merely of libations of *kumys* (mare's milk), but in former times horses were often dedicated. They were simply let loose in the wilderness. Also the Yakuts preferred animals of light colour.[15]

These libations of *kumys* were offered by the *Yakuts* as well as the Mongols on the occasion of important festivals. The Mongols celebrate an important feast in spring which they call

*Urus-Sara*; the Yakuts make libations on all important occasions. Libations are not restricted to certain dates. Such a feast they call *Ysyah*. They celebrate private and general *Ysyahs*; and in fact every important transaction (a marriage, a declaration of war) is introduced by an *Ysyah*. At such an *Ysyah* the shaman plays no part; the head of the family is the officiating priest, or a clan leader or any elder. In the past they celebrated every year two regular *Ysyahs*: a small one in spring, which coincided with the *Urus-Sara* of the Mongols, and the great *Ysyah* in high summer. At this latter *Ysyah* a proper public meeting was held at which all communal affairs were discussed. A peculiarity of this feast is the absence of bloody sacrifices. The main ceremony is performed when the master of ceremonies takes a special vessel filled with *kumys*, kneels down and recites a prayer addressed to the "white creator god" (literally: creator-heaven). Finally he pours some *kumys* on the ground or into the fire, then drinks himself a little and offers the rest to the most important personages in the meeting. Each one drinks and hands on the glass to the next highest in rank.

Meanwhile other vessels with *kumys* are distributed among the common people. This is followed by a general entertainment: youths sing ancient songs in chorus; races are held and other matches which have a special significance.

In the ancient songs the nature in spring and the past economy of the Yakuts—a pure nomadic shepherd culture!—are being described, also the nomadic life is nostalgically compared with the flight of the birds of passage, the social organisation of the Yakuts with the colts and foals diversified in colour. Finally ethnical precepts are recalled to mind: how the various classes of Yakut society should live together, men with women, the young ones and the adults, the rich and the poor, superiors and subjects.[16] If to this is added that the competing matches are a school for physical training, for perseverance and skill in fighting, these *Ysyahs* remind the observer of the initiation ceremonies of the hunting cultures. This and other factors, such as religious beliefs, in a Supreme Being, in a soul and its fate after death, funeral rites, social institutions, economic preferences, etc., suggest that the culture of the nomadic animal breeders in Inner Asia evolved straight from the primitive hunting culture, remnants of which can still be found in the arctic circle and in north-eastern Siberia.[17]

Various traditions of the Yakuts maintain that in earlier times at the great *Ysyah* in high summer a white stallion and white mares were often dedicated to Urün-Tangara, a deity of theirs.

The strongly religious character of the Yakut *Ysyah* reveals itself in a striking prayer, recited by an elder Yakut: "Ai-Toen, I thank thee. Thou hast given us the summer, thou hast given us many calves, foals and milk. Thou hast clothed the forest with the adornment of spring, and the meadows with green grass. Soon we shall mow the grass and harvest the grain, thy gift for which we waited so long. To thee, Ai-Toen, I lift up this vessel filled with *kumys* and I beg thee: bless us and our animals, give fat grass to our meadows, health and vitality to our cattle. Toen, accept our sacrifice, drink our oblation and bless it so that we too after participating in the drink may become healthy and happy!"[18]

Among the Abakan-Tatars and the Sagais a general feast is celebrated in high summer when the moon is full. This feast is explicitly called "the offering for the heaven". No shaman is present and plays a part; the whole ritual is performed by a man of the people. Before the sacrifice of young sheep is performed, a birch tree is solemnly sprinkled with sweet or sour mare's milk. Remarkable is the prayer which is recited on this occasion: the leader of the feast prays invoking the nine gods and asking for long life, health and wealth. At every interval the people shout "O heaven!"

The same Abakan Tatars also perform a so-called mountain sacrifice at which seven lambs are slaughtered in the usual manner: their bellies are cut open and the hearts and lungs torn out. A birch tree is sprinkled as in the sacrifice to heaven. While this rite is performed, a horse has to stand near the birch, not tied to it. This horse may not be killed afterwards.

## AMONG THE MONGOLS AND TIBETANS

The Mongol-Buryat are residing in eastern Siberia; they are divided in two sections: in a northern section, living north-west of Lake Baikal as far as the Oka river, and a southern or trans-Baikalian section. The Buryat prefer a white horse as their sacrificial victim.[19] They too give the horse first a bath and sprinkle its face with milk. J.G. Georgi writes that they also dedicate horses to their gods: "They call the dedication of horses Kukumurin Sulbundu Ongulbulde, *i.e.*, the dedication of a horse to god Sulbundu; the horse is Ongon murin, "horse of the gods". The motive is either piety, or anxiety and precaution, or real trouble, when for instance the herds do not increase. Usually Tabun stallions are dedicated as protectors and guardians of horses. As among the Tungus, such horses may not be sold, given away or slaughtered. If they die, their skins are treated as after a sacrifice and hung up on a tree. The flesh is eaten".[20]

The motive of the horse sacrifice is increase of fertility. But it is also performed to gain the protection of certain spirits and to get security from their attacks. But the Buryat dedicate and sacrifice not only horses, also bulls, he-goats and rams. No woman is permitted to ride on the dedicated animals; they may not even touch their harness and reins. Buryat women are however permitted to milk dedicated cows and mares. And if certain rules are observed such animals may even be slaughtered: the head of the dedicated animal may not be skinned after killing it; and the slaughtered animal must immediately be replaced by another. The head of the slaughtered animal must be exposed on a special platform resting on four posts.[21]

Sandschejew, himself a Buryat, maintains that the term 'dedication' for this ceremony—in the sense of setting the animal apart as the property of the god or spirit is not quite correct and exact.[22] For the god or spirit indeed "takes hold" of the dedicated animal, he "incorporates" it. This is the conviction of the Buryat and related peoples, also of the Ainus. They see in the dedicated animal not so much a sacrificial victim, but the god or spirit himself who is being sent back as their ambassador or messenger to plead for them. This "sending back" is of course achieved by the sacrifice of the animal.

As far as Tibet is concerned, it is certain that the great majority of its population is derived from former nomadic tribals. It is believed that in the past they lived in the Kukunor region and, according to an old Chinese legend, immigrated into the central parts of China about 2300 B.C. They settled in Tibet probably not before the fourth or fifth century A.D.[23] When they arrived in Tibet it had been probably uninhabited, except for its southern regions. These earlier settlers were most probably pushed out by the Tibetans. Such tribes which the Tibetans call Mon are indeed found in the vicinity of Tibet in the eastern Himalaya region, in the country of the source of the Brahmaputra and of the Indus river.

The cultural constitution of the Tibetans is no more uniform than that of their racial one. Already since the time of Herodotus was Tibet exposed to influences from Persia and through Persia from Asia Minor. This influence continued also through later times. It is the basis of that culture in Tibet which to a certain extent was imposed on the primitive hunting culture or existed side by side. It was called Bön.[24]

In Lamaism there exists only one minor deity which according to Nebesky-Wojkowitz belonged originally probably into the Bön religion.[25] Its function is similar to that of the house god of the central Indian tribes the Gond and Baiga, of whom more discussion will find place in later chapters. It is the house god *Nanglha* (the inside god) who is venerated throughout Tibet. The Tibetans believe him to be living in every house. But he does not occupy a permanent corner, but changes it seasonally. He is portrayed in human form, with a pig's head and clothed in loose garments. This house god is venerated with libations of tea and Tibetan beer.

Similar to the 'god of house and hearth' are the Shidag spirits whom the Lamaists also seem to have borrowed from the Bön religion. The Shidag, 'possessors of the foundation walls', are believed to stay in the fundaments of the monasteries and leave these places rarely. Every lamaistic temple has its own Shidag, and a special shrine is erected to it on the right side of the temple's entrance. Due to its fierce demonic character, also bloody sacrifices are offered to the Shidag.

The Amdo Nomads, however, like to offer a sacrifice which resembles more the horse sacrifice of the inner-Asiatic nomadic shepherd races. "In grave sickness the Amdo vows to offer for his life a sheep, a yak or a horse as substitute. It must be a faultless animal; it should not have given birth yet, but it can be a castrated animal. A tassel consisting of ribbons of five different colours—red, yellow, blue, white and black, is tied into the mane or wool of the animal. The animal is now dedicated to the god of heaven and may not be used any further, neither for riding nor for carrying goods. It may not be sold or slaughtered, but is led loose until its death.[26]

Hermanns claims that bloody horse sacrifices were never in use among the Amdo Tibetans. According to their tradition only the Bön brought this sacrifice into Tibet.[27]

## SUMMARY

Already in the introduction to this chapter the parallels have been pointed out which connect this sacrifice of the shepherd nomads with the *aśvamedha* of the Indo-Aryans.

Soviet publications after the end of the second world war presented the thesis that pastoral nomadism developed out of an agrarian economy. Tribes with a complex economy (agriculture plus animal breeding) separated themselves from a sedentary life and turned into "Early Nomads" *i.e.*, warlike mounted pastoralists who interfered almost immediately in the life of sedentary civilisations.

This transformation appears to have taken place in at least two stages: Already during the third millennium B.C. we can trace cattle-breeding tribes in some areas, not only in Central Asia. Much later, not before the first millennium B.C. some of these tribes became perfect horse breeders who specialised in mounted warfare. They expanded to the northern fringes of the steppe-belt and might therefore be called "Northern Nomads".

The "early Nomads" lived more or less in symbiosis, side by side with sedentary farmers. These farmers could trade grain against all kinds of useful articles and luxury goods in which the animal breeders traded. They also seemed to have found metal ore on the fringes of the steppe which they or their slaves melted and manufactured into utensils or ornaments. It is doubtful whether they had any trade in animals as the farmers reared their own animals.

Such centres of intensive and mobile animal breeding rose up certainly on the Arabic peninsula, in the east-European steppes, even perhaps in North-West Europe (beecher cultures). The existence of such nomadic centres was connected or coincided with the growth and diffusion of important language groups, such as that of the Semites and Indo-Iranians. The expansion of Turc and Mongolian races in Central Asia took place at a later date. It is not yet known to what causes this rise of pastoral nomadism must be attributed.

K. Jettmar[28] maintains that not only in ancient Egypt, but also in Luristan and Bactria, as far as the border of Central Asia nomadic shepherd races lived together with agriculturists and this symbiosis certainly led to an intensive and profitable use of all available resources. According to F.R. Allchin the situation was similar in India.[29] G.L. Possehl and B. Allchin come to the conclusion that even in the Harappa culture such a cooperation between the city people with nomadic animal breeders existed. They lived in permanent exchange of goods and complemented each other mutually; thus this symbiosis was beneficial and fruitful for both sides, even indispensable for their living.[30]

But it appears that long before the symbiosis of agriculturists with nomadic riding horse breeders "Early Nomads" too had made contact with agriculturists. Similar rock paintings of a peculiar type of "Early Nomads" can be found not only in South Siberia, but as far west as the Upper Indus valley. And these similarities extend not only to rock paintings, but also to common elements in their mythology, in the formation of masks and in sun symbolism, even in the painting of cattle.[31]

Thus the *aśvamedha* horse sacrifice of the Vedic Indians would belong into the later phase of nomadic animal breeders, while the pig sacrifice of the Baigas and Gonds, so similar to that of the North-East Siberian tribes, would belong into the phase of the "Early Nomads".

It would also appear that this sacrificial complex of sending a messenger into the other world has its origin among the agriculturists, was taken along by the "Early Nomads" into their culture of specialised pastoralism and gradually changed and adapted to their own new ideology. From these "Early Nomads" primitive hunting tribes in northern Siberia and North America adopted this sacrificial complex and developed it into a sending-off ritual well adapted to a hunting ideology. But it is also possible that the agriculturists adopted a sacrificial rite from primitive hunters, developed it into an elaborate ritual and then handed it on to the nomadic animal breeders.

## NOTES

1. T. Lehtisalo, 1924, 30.
2. T. Lehtisalo, 1924, 92.
3. T. Lehtisalo, 1924, 139.
4. Ṿenjamin in: *T. Lehtisalo*, 1924, 30 f.; *cf.* also: A.G. Schrenk, 1848, I, 407; F. Flor, 1930, 141.
5. A. Th. von Middendorff, 1875, 1463.
6. J.G. Georgi, 1775, I, 284.
7. W.S. Radloff, 1893, II, 19.
8. S. Bergmann, 1926, 157 f.
9. *Cf.* Ọ. Beke, 1934, 65, 396, 709.
10. D. Zelenin, 1928, 84 f.
11. W. Werbickij (1883, 46 f.) reports that even the tongue of the horse is removed; but Zelenin has not seen it done.
12. But if the sacrifice is not addressed to Uelhän, but to evil deities, the head looks in the western direction.
13. Zelenin heard from the Cumandins that the masked men dancing around with the phallus do not represent a stallion, but "somebody else". He believes, a spirit. But W. Werbickij (1887, 145) holds that they represent a speeding stallion, the symbol of fertile spring powers.
14. W. Amschler, 1933, 305-13.
15. W. Jochelson, 1906, 263 f.
16. V.L. Sjerosevskij, 1896, 464.
17. A. Gahs, 1926, 228 f.
18. V.L. Priklonskij, 1890-1, I, 25.
19. J. Curtin, 1909, 44.
20. J.G. Georgi, 1775, 321.
21. G. Sandschejew, 1927, 934.
22. G. Sandschejew, 1927, 938.
23. W.W. Rockhill, 1891, 335.
24. A. Grünwedel, 1891.
25. R. von Nebesky Wojkowitz, 1947, 36.
26. M. Hermanns, 1949, 49
27. M. Hermanns, 1949, 163.
28. K. Jettmar, 1983, 33-43.
29. F.R. Allchin, 1981.
30. G.L. Possehl, 1979; B. Allchin, 1981.
31. K. Jettmar, 1983, 33-43.

# 3

# PARALLELS TO THE *AŚVAMEDHA* AMONG THE INDO-GERMANIC PEOPLES

## AMONG THE GERMANIC PEOPLES

IT is proved from many sources that the Indo-Germans and related tribes of the classical period performed similar sacrifices. They are certainly related with the inner-Asiatic animal breeders also in racial and cultural aspects. Unfortunately, no complete account exists about such sacrifices. But almost all the features which are found in the inner-Asiatic ritual are reported as being in existence in this or that Indo-German people though they are rarely described in completeness in the ritual of one tribe. But we must also remember that these sacrifices need not always be of horses, since even the inner-Asiatic tribes sacrifice other animals too by the same ritual.

Still, the horse is among almost all Indo-German peoples a very popular sacrificial animal. This is a well proven fact. Already J. von Negelein[1] has carefully collected all traditions about this fact. He finds clear traces and remnants of horse sacrifice among most Indo-Germanic tribes. L. von Schröder is of the same opinion[2] and he agrees with O. Schrader who states: "The Horse sacrifice is attested by most Aryan tribes."[3]

The Germans considered the horse to be something divine. Sleipnir, Odin's stallion, is the son of Loki. The souls of Odin and of his horse flow, as inseparable unities, into each other. Horses were frequently called by the name of Odin, and Odin, on the other hand, often assumed a sur-name taken from his horse or from riding."[4]

Tacitus shows[5] that the Germans not only venerated horses as the confidants of the gods, but also kept sacred horses in the neighbourhood of god Freyr's temples. Wotan of course was their lord and protector[6]. In any case the Germans seem to have attached some mysterious qualities to the horse, "it knows more than the priests, it is the confidant of the gods". Horses are superior to the priests, the latter are the intermediaries, the former the confidants of the gods.[7] Horses prophesy the future by their neighing and snorting which are then interpreted by the priests according to certain traditional rules.

The conceptional association of the horse with the sun also was known to the ancient Gernans: The find at Trundholm, for instance, from the time of about 2000 B.C., depicts a horse yoked to the sun chariot. Among the Greeks this conception was common property.

According to Herodotus the Massagetes (ancestors of the Alans) were worshippers of the sun to whom they sacrificed horses.[8]

M. Ninck[9] further relates: "The horse sacrifice was in vogue among all Germanic tribes and was considered the noblest sacrifice".[10] The earlier tribes sacrificed often the entire booty of animals after a battle to 'Mars and Mercur' (*i.e.*, Ziu and Wotan).[11] Dietmar of Merseburg relates that at the great feast of the gods at Leira which was repeated in January every ninth year 99 horses were sacrificed. With their blood the altars of many places were sprinkled, as also the walls of the temples and the participants at the sacrifice.[12]

The heads were hung up on tree poles, the flesh was eaten.[13] "In the North a skull of the horse was stuck up on a pole at the boundary of a hostile district. . ."

The ancient Germans also had the custom of dedicating sacred horses to Freyr, the god of vegetation; such horses were afterwards let loose. They could not be mounted; offenders were punished by death. Tacitus too mentions that the oracle horses in the sacred groves were free of all ordinary toil.

W. Golther thinks that these horses were sacred to the sky god.[14]

These just mentioned oracle horses, as Tacitus further mentions, had by necessity to be of white colour. "They are white as snow and not defiled by any labour in the service of man".[15]

Exact information about the time when the Germans sacrificed their horses is missing, but it seems that the majority of these horse sacrifices were connected with the dead; they took place on occasion of funerals. But sacrifices were certainly also performed on occasions other than funerals. Such sacrifices were in the first line addressed at deities like Odin and Freyr—both appear also as gods of the dead, Odin primarily so, Freyr only secondarily. But some reports seem to suggest that in former times the horse sacrifices were addressed to a sky god.[16]

In connection with these horse sacrifices it is not mentioned that no bone of the victim should be broken, but we know that this was the rule when other animals were sacrificed. Thus no bone may be broken of the he-goats of Thor whom he slaughters. The bones are sewn into the skin and the next morning the goats are restored to life and health.[17]

In a myth related from Vorarlberg we are told of a cow sacrifice which the "wild horde" performed. The children of the house were offered some of the meat, but were strictly forbidden to gnaw asunder or to lose any bone. But once a bone was lost. The other bones were wrapped into the skin and the next morning the cow was revived; but the animal limped because a bone was missing.[18]

In the Germanic horse sacrifice the victim's head usually received a special treatment. Pope Gregor the Great mentions this fact in his exhortation to Brünhild when he is speaking about sacrifices to the gods.

"Cutting off and exposing the heads of the sacrificed horses is a very ancient custom. In Scandinavia the skulls of horses were exposed on poles and the gaping mouth, held wide open with sticks was directed towards the region whence the man whom they wanted to harm was expected to come. This pole was called the pole of hatred."[19]

Sacrifices of horses alone were rare; generally other animals too were sacrificed along with them. Often their blood was sprinkled on the horse.

The use of obscenities was not ruled out: In the so-called magic of Wölsi the penis of the horse was preserved and handed around by women who on this occasion exchanged obscenities. There were also some allusions about a ritualistic castration and about rites in which intoxicating drinks were offered.[20]

At the procession of goddesses in a chariot drawn by horses the climax of the feast was reached when they met with male gods disguised as horses, and united with them.[21]

## AMONG THE CELTS AND OTHER PEOPLES

The Celts too performed horse sacrifices[22], usually along with the sacrifices of other animals, especially during the summer solstice[23]. At Lugdunum horse racing was one of the features in connection with the harvest festival at Roman times, but among the Celts. However, the scanty information we have about this festival does not allow us to draw the conclusion that this sacrifice had anything to do with the inner-Asiatic horse sacrifice.

But the Celts used to sacrifice human beings in a manner which reminds us strongly of this ritual: Servius[24] mentions that during an epidemic disease at Marseilles a man offered himself in sacrifice. After making his offer public, he was entertained for some time at public costs. Finally he was clothed in sacred twigs, led around in procession and at last, after a prayer that all evils of the public might fall on him, slayed to the ground at full length.

Varro, quoted by St. Augustine[25], mentions human sacrifices which were addressed to a god whom he compares with Saturnus, because of all seeds the human race was supposed to be the best, *i.e.*, that human sacrifices would best promote fertility.

A rite of crowning the king is known from ancient Ireland which—with certain modifications—has great similarity with the inner-Asiatic Horse-sacrifice. The historic account of this crowning ritual which is dated in the twelfth century and has been published by Fr. R. Schröder[26] mentions that the king to be crowned had to cohabit in a solemn act with a white mare.

After that the mare was killed (sacrificed) and the flesh cooked and eaten. The king had to bathe in the water in which the meat was boiled.

The Romans too practised the sacrifice of horses. This sacrifice reminds us in some features of the inner-Asiatic horse sacrifice. It is the sacrifice of the so-called October Horse.[27]

The sacrifice took place annually on the 15th of October, consequently in harvest time. But according to Eitrem[28] Wissowa has undoubtedly proved that this sacrifice had a certain connection with the so-called Equirries in spring.

The sacrifices were addressed to Mars who was a war god, but on the other hand also the "divine protector of the fields and of the crops".

The sacrifice was preceded by a horse race, most probably in order to purify the horses from all inner pollution by their sweat. The right horse of the leading chariot, consequently the best and fastest horse, was selected for sacrifice.

The killing of the horse departed from the usual manner of despatching an animal because the horse was not killed by hammer and axe, but with a javelin. According to Eitrem it was even shot at with javelins.

The dead horse was then cut up. The entrails were artistically divided and then usually cooked and placed on the altar. Of the other parts of the body the bag of the intestines, the udder and the tail were also placed on the altar. About the possession of the horse's head the inhabitants of two city districts usually came to a fight; the people of the one district, when they had won it, placed the head crowned with a wreath on their *regia*, while if the other district won, the head was exposed on a tower. One of the men took the tail after it had been cut off and sprinkled the blood dripping from it on the altar.

On the same day a curious rite was performed: the so-called auction of the *sardes*. An old man was dressed in the *toga praetexta* and the golden *bulla* and auctioned to the man making the highest bid. Earlier, other prisoners of war (*sardes*) were auctioned, but this last man was the most worthless one. It was expected from him that he behaved deliberately in the most puerile and foolish manner.

Livius (V, 23, 5) also mentions that the Romans had the custom of keeping white horses as sacred animals. The white horse was the favourite animal of Jupiter and Phoebus. Such an animal could be used for riding, but not as a draught-animal.[29]

It is well known that Caesar let some sacred horses loose when he crossed the Rubicon. The animals were allowed to run loose in the direction of the river.[30]

Among the Greeks a rite was common in all sacrifices which at least in some measure reminds us of the inner-Asiatic horse sacrifice. After killing the victim, the bones and some parts of the flesh were wrapped into the fat of the skin and burned on the altar. The rest of the flesh had to be eaten on the spot by all participants. The skulls of the sacrificial animals were nailed at the wall of the temple or on a tree in the sacred grove.[31]

But the Greeks speak comparatively seldom of horse sacrifices; still less frequent are such horse sacrifices which resemble the inner-Asiatic sacrifices. Still, several gods of the Greeks seem to have been honoured by horse sacrifices: so was Helios, the sun god, and Poseidon, the god of the sea. "Later Poseidon is at times himself a horse and cohabits in this shape with a mare who is Demeter and who bears the magic horse Arion. Thus Poseidon became the protector of the whole horse raising people, especially of the nobles and their horse races. Horses were led to the sea and drowned in his honour, adorned with reins.[32] These sacrificial horses had to be of white colour.

At the grave of those virgins who had been raped by Lakaedemonian youths and had then committed suicide, a white mare was sacrificed.[33]

Even the animal chase previous to a sacrifice was practised in Greece. Usually it was a chase of bulls. "We know of a custom in Tessaly according to which wild bulls were chased by riders till exhaustion and then captured".[34]

Though many elements of the inner-Asiatic horse sacrifice are also found in the Greek sacrificial ritual, we cannot say that the Greeks performed a sacrifice which resembled the horse sacrifice of the Altai tribes.

No definite information is available about a horse sacrifice among the Slavs. The historian Saxo Grammaticus however relates that their god Svantovit "had as his special property a horse of white colour. It was considered a crime to pick hairs from its mane and tail".[35] L. Weber adds that its priest alone was allowed to graze and to mount it.[36]

It is related in the Augsburg Annals 1068 that a Bishop Burkhardt of Halberstadt made an invasion into the region of the Liuticians and devastated and burnt it. He is said to have returned to Saxony riding a horse which in Rethra-Riedegost was worshipped as divine.[37]

Like the Germans, the Slavs too used horses for divination.[38]

It is related of the Prussians that they "sacrificed after a victory, but before the sacrifice they chased the horses till they were exhausted." Horse sacrifices consequently took place after a war, and the horses were chased before they were sacrificed.[39] Some tribes believed that their gods preferred white horses, other tribes claimed that they liked best black horses.

Of particular importance appears the ritualistic role of the white horse in Iran. Two-thirds of all sources speaking of the horse among the South-Iranians mention a white horse.[40] According to Herodotus, white horses were specially bred in the Misaean meadows for religious purposes. The connection of the horse, in particular of the white horse, with the sun is frequently mentioned.[41] Strabo relates a method of sacrifice which perhaps was also applied in horse sacrifice. He states that some magicians killed the sacrificial animals (without mentioning whether horses were among them) not by stabbing them with a knife, but by slaying them with a club. It was probably done to avoid the shedding of blood. In fact, there is no mention of a sprinkling of blood by the ancient Persians. However, they also have bloody sacrifices in which the victim is cut to pieces; the cutting off of the fetlocks is specially emphasised.[42] But in spite of these stray features resembling the ancient Vedic horse sacrifice, a Persian horse sacrifice with a ritual of the Vedic *aśvamedha* is unknown.

In the Yasna some passages, however, point at the possibility that in the hoary past a bull was killed with a similar ritual. H. Güntert[43] maintains that such a bull sacrifice is quite likely in the ancient cult. It is also related that in the bull sacrifice of which the Great Bundhišn gives an account, Ohrmazd offers hemp to the victim and rubs its eyes with it, "in order to reduce the injustice of the slaying and the distress over the pain".[44]

Eroticism also plays a certain part in this sacrifice.

The Mithras cult too contains traces of this sacrificial ritual: Already the Persians venerated this god as one equal to Ohrmazd. The god is represented as a splendid knight, a warrior on white horses.[45] In its essentials the myth of Mithras goes as follows:

> The first being created by Ohrmazd was the primary bull. Mithras, born out of a rock and adored by shepherds, contracts a union of friendship with the sun god. The latter sends a raven to Mithras with the request to kill the bull. Mithras who had already once before caught the bull but had allowed him to escape again catches him, swings himself on his back and pierces his heart with a knife. From the wound all plants and herbs came into existence, from his blood the wine and all fertile life.[46]

The sacrifice of the Scythians reminds us in its method of killing the victim strongly of the horse sacrifice of the Altai tribes: "The victim is placed with fettered forelegs. The officiating priest, standing at its back, pulls at the other end of the rope and throws the animal on the ground. When the victim falls he invokes the god to whom he sacrifices, then he quickly throws a loop around the neck of the victim, squeezes a stick in, and turns it so long until the victim is strangled. No fire is kindled, nor is an offering made or a libation poured into the fire. When the animal is dead it is skinned and the flesh boiled."[47] This reminds us of the "barbarian" slaying of a bull by Vyāmbura which is described with horror in Yašt 14, 54, 5. The quotation runs as follows:

> "The bull is especially sacred to Vĕrĕthraghna." In 54-55, the grave injustice is mentioned which Vĕrĕthraghna is done by a people mentioned only here in this connection, namely the Vyāmbura, who are called Daēva worshippers: "They do not pay reverence to the soul of

> the bull, they pour away and spill its blood, they break its spine, tear its body, tear its limbs from the body, tear its ears from the head and press out its eyes."[48]

These ultimately mentioned "tortures" of the victim were found among tribes who were at least distantly related to the Indo-Germanic tribes. When the victim—among the Scythians usually a horse—is slaughtered it is at once cut up and its flesh cooked. Some pieces of the flesh are thrown at the deity invoked, the rest is eaten by the worshippers.[49]

## SUMMARY

After this cursory survey we may state that the Indo-Germanic and related peoples in ancient Europe and in the Near East know of some stray elements of the sacrificial rite which so far we have studied as typical in the *aśvamedha* horse sacrifice and in the sacrificial rites of the Altai shepherd nomads. But it appears that the Indo-Germans did not preserve it in its totality.

It should, however, not be forgotten that our information about these ancient peoples is still very scanty and no one of their historians has so far paid much attention to this form of sacrifice. It is quite possible that more elements of this sacrificial complex were practised by the Germanic peoples but no historian found it necessary to mention them. Some of them might have been so commonly in use that their existence was simply taken for granted and not specially recorded.

Another reason for the absence of at least a part of these rites in this sacrificial complex is that the Indo-Germans belong to a racial group which has moved away farthest from the centre of origin of this sacrificial complex. On their long migration they have lost some of the elements of the ritual and replaced them by others.

Some Indo-Germanic peoples seem to have replaced the Inner-Asiatic sacrificial complex which had its origin among a typically hunting culture and developed into a sacrificial complex in harmony with the culture of nomadic animal breeders, with a sacrificial complex which had developed among agriculturists. The latter had changed a number of elements of the ritual which now fitted better into their ideology. For instance, they found the essence of life no more in breath, but in the blood. And they introduced magic practices into the ritual, practices which were absent in the ritual of the Inner-Asiatic and Altai tribes. In another chapter this sacrificial complex as it developed among the peoples of a typically agrarian culture will be described in detail.

## NOTES

1. J. von Negelein, 1903.
2. L. von Schröder, 1916, II, 374.
3. O. Schrader, 1901, 624; *cf.*, W. Köppers, 1929, 1078.
4. M. Ninck, 1935, 93; O. Höfler, 1934, I, 38.
5. Tacitus: Germania, Ch. 10.
6. *Cf.*, W. Koppers, 1936, 285.
7. *Cf.*, the sacred horse of the Freyr-worshipper and temple priest Hrafnkel (Thule XII, 75 f.); another horse Freyfaxi (Thule X, 90).
8. F. Justi, 1879, 44.
9. M. Ninck, 1935, 94.
10. W. Grimm, 1829, 38 f.
11. *Cf.*, Tacitus: Ann. 13, 57.
12. Thule, XIV, 149 f.
13. Thule, IV, 230; XIV, 153 f.
14. W. Golther, 1895, 203.
15. Tacitus Germania, X; in folklore we often meet the white colour of the horse in stories which have riders on a white horse for subject.
16. *Cf.*, W. Koppers, 1936, 285.
17. Snorra Edda, Gylfaginning, 44. *See* Thule XX, 91.
18. O. Höfler, 1934, 125.
19. J. Grimm, 1942, 144.
20. Edda Min. 123 f. *See* Thule II, 31 and 185.
21. O. Höfler, 1934, 96; *cf.* also: K.F. Johannsen, 1917-19, 97.
22. *Cf.* W. Koppers, 1936, 288 f.
23. Chantepie de la Saussaye, 1925, II, 618.
24. Servius, to Aen. III, 57.
25. St. Augustine: De Civitate Dei, VII, 19.
26. Fr. R. Schröder, 1927, 310.
27. Chantepie de la Saussaye, 1925, II, 423 f.; *Cf.* also J.G. Frazer, 1928, 695.
28. S. Eitrem, 1917, 4-50.
29. R. Hindringer, 1932, 9 f.
30. *Cf.*, W. Koppers, 1936, 291.
31. Chantepie de la Saussaye, 1925, II, 283 and 293.
32. J. Burckhardt, 1940, 185.
33. *Cf.*, V. Seunig, 1921, 34-7.
34. L. Malten, 1914, 214.

35. E. Wienecke, 1940, 194.
36. L. Weber, 1931, 75.
37. E. Wienecke, 1940, 225.
38. E. Wienecke, 1940, 196 and 273 f.
39. Chantepie de la Saussaye, 1925, II, 528.
40. *Cf.*, W. Koppers, 1936, 294; also: Herodotus VII, 40, 110; Xenophon: Kyrus V.2, 17; Curtius Rufus Hist. Alex. III, 11; Appianus: Mithridat, 70.
41. Herodotus III, 20; Junianus Justinus: Epit. hist. Philipp, I, 10, 5; Xenophon: Exp. Cyr, VIII, 3, 11 f.; Curtius Rufus: Hist. Alex. III, 11; Philostratus: Vita Apollon. I, 51; Pausanias: Graec. deser, III, 420.
42. Yasna, 14, 50; more strongly Videvvat, 18, 70.
43. H. Günterf, 1923, 367.
44. K. Meuli, 1935, 133.
45. Chantepie de la Saussaye, 1925, II, 497 f. and 226.
46. K. Aram, 1929, 177; F. Cumont, 1903.
47. H.S. Nyberg, 1938, 256.
48. H.S. Nyberg, 1938, 71.
49. I. Löwenberg, 1880, 42.

## 4

# PARALLELS TO THE *AŚVAMEDHA* AMONG THE PALAEO-SIBERIANS

IN the extreme north-east of Asia reside primitive hunting and food-gathering tribes which are generally grouped under the name Palaeo-Siberians. W. Schmidt would include at least part of these tribes in the so-called arctic culture circle[1], which, according to the history of cultural evolution[2], have retained a very old and primitive stage of culture. Even if we do not accept the general scheme of the culture-historical school of Anthropology, we must admit that these tribes have not progressed very far from a primitive hunting culture. Without doubt this is due to the extreme difficulties of an adverse environment. No wonder that only with the assistance of modern technology and education will these tribes be able to reach the standard of modern culture.

According to A. Gahs[3], who made a special study of the religion of the Palaeo-Siberians, they are divided into two groups: a western group, the tribes of the Jenissei, and an eastern, comprising the following tribes: the Gilyak, Ainu, Itelmen, Aleutians, Koryak, Chukchee, and Yukaghir. As far as their religion is concerned, the Amur Tungus, today mixed with remnants of Palaeo-Siberians, and the Koreans too, belong to this group.

Now all these tribes perform or at least performed until the recent past, a bear sacrifice which shows striking similarities with the horse sacrifice of the Inner-Asiatic nomadic cattle-breeders. Indeed, it appears that the centre of this sacrificial complex is really the primitive hunting culture of the Palaeo-Siberians, though in the past they may have lived in more southern regions with a milder climate and better conditions for hunting. These primitive hunting tribes were probably split asunder and pushed off into relatively isolated and inaccessible regions by later invading and superior races and tribes who forcibly occupied their territory. According to Kai Donner the western group of the Palaeo-Siberians (Ostyak) indeed reached in former times much further to the south.[4] And W. Radloff[5] would attribute to the tribes of the Jenissei the Bronze Culture which has been found on the upper Jenissei. He believes that the tribes of the Jenissei were once agriculturists and metal workers. In the past they were settled in the whole area around the Altai, South Siberia, the eastern Kirghis steppe, the Tarbagatai and western Mongolia. These tribes of the Jenissei, on the other hand, must have been in contact with Tibeto-Chinese tribes, for in their languages we find Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Chinese linguistic elements.[6] This would prove that the Palaeo-Siberians were in the past not as isolated as they are now. Thus they could easily have spread the ritual of the bear sacrifice among the nomadic horse-breeders of Inner Asia and even among the agriculturists of southern Asia. The horse and cattle breeders of central Asia as well as the agriculturists of course modified the sacrificial complex of the primitive hunters and adapted it to their own peculiar ideology and culture.

## THE BEAR SACRIFICE OF THE AINU

As already mentioned, the Ainu are, or at least were in the past, nomadic hunters and food-gatherers. Their most valuable game animal is the bear.

The racial origin of the Ainu is upto-date still unknown;[7] but this shall not prevent us from describing one of their religious ceremonies, because this sacrificial rite is nothing unique but a rite which is found also among other tribes of north-eastern Asia. The question about the origin of this sacrifice must remain open until much later. The description is by John Batchelor.[8]

When a young bear is about to be sacrificed, the day before this, to us, a cruel and barbarous feast takes place, the owner sends round to all his people of the village, and invites them to come and take part in the festivities. He also invites guests from the distant villages, and they are pretty certain to come, for there will be a good opportunity for getting intoxicated. By and by all are ordered to the *nusa* place, and made to sit in a large circle, the old men in front. After this an Ainu is chosen who, having approached the bear, sits down before it and tells it that they are about to send it forth to its ancestors. He prays pardon for what they are about to do, hopes it will not be angry, tells it what an honour it is about to be conferred upon it, and comforts it with the consolation that a large number of *inao*[9] and plenty of wine, cakes and other good cheer will be sent along with it.

After the prayer has been said another Ainu goes to the cub's cage and catches the victim's head in a rope having a noose made in it for that purpose. Thus, when the animal comes out of the cage it is led along by two men, one on each side.

As soon as the poor beast is out of the cage the people who have formed the ring shout and clap their hands while it is being led into their midst, and upon its arrival they take blunt arrows and shoot at it, thus trying to work it up into a passion. The shouting now becomes deafening, and the bear sometimes furious. But the wilder the bear becomes the more delighted do the people get. When the excited and struggling brute shows signs of exhaustion a stake is driven into the ground in the centre of the ring of people, and to it the bear is tied.

As soon as all is secure the blunt arrows are shot with renewed vigour, and the beast tears at its ropes till it is quite tired out. Then comes the most exciting time as a true test of vigour. All at once some brave young Ainu will rush forward and seize the brute by the ears and fur of the face, whilst another suddenly rushes out and seizes it by the hind quarters. These men both pull at the animal with all their might. This causes it to open its mouth. Another man then rushes forward with a round piece of wood about two feet long; this he thrusts into the bear's jaws. The poor beast in his rage bites hard at this, and holds it hard between its teeth. Next two men come forward, one on each side of the bear, and seize its forelegs, and pull them out as far as they can. Then two others will in a like manner catch hold of the two hind-legs. When all this has been done quite satisfactorily, the two long poles which were laid by the *nusa* are brought forward. One is placed under its throat, and the other upon the nape of its neck.

A good shot with the bow, who has been previously determined by the men, now comes up and shoots the arrow into the beast's heart,[10] and so ends its misery. Care has to be taken to so strike the brute that no blood is shed, for, for some reason or other, it is considered unfortunate to allow any of the blood to fall upon the earth. Should it do so it must be quickly wiped up with some of the sacred *inao* shavings.

As soon then as the bear has been shot in the heart it is carried to the two poles, which have been previously placed upon the ground for this purpose, and its head placed upon one of them, while the other is put over its neck. Now all the people shout and rush forward, every one is eager to assist in squeezing the animal till life is quite extinct. It is said that they must be careful not to allow the poor beast to utter any cries during its death struggles, for this is thought to be very unlucky; why, I cannot learn. People become so very excited at the time the cub is throttled that they sometimes trample upon one another in their eagerness to have a hand in the death. And so the poor brute is killed, and the first part of the sacrifice is accomplished.

As soon as it is strangled to death the bear is skinned and its head cut off. The skin, however, being left attached to the head. This is taken to the east window and placed upon a mat called *inao-so*, and ornamented with *inao*-shavings, ear-rings, beads, and other things. After having been dressed up a piece of its own flesh is cut off and placed under the snout.

Then a piece of dried fish and a mustache lifter, neatly made up into a parcel, is put before it, also some millet dumplings, a cup of its own meat boiled, and some *sake*. This having done, a man worships, saying, "O cub, we give thee these *inao*, cakes, and dried fish; take them to your parents, and say: "I have been brought up for a long time by an Ainu father and mother, and have been kept from all trouble and harm. As I am now grown big I am come to thee. I have also brought these *inao*, cakes, and dried fish. Please, rejoice." If you say this to them they will be very glad".

After this worship has been performed millet dumplings are threaded on sticks, and placed beside the head. The men now all readjust or don their crowns. This done, they have a good dance altogether.

After the dance is over, they return to the hut, and make quantities of *inao*, which are carefully placed upon the bear's head. In the meantime some of the cub's flesh has been boiled. A cup of this is now taken, and set before the beast's snout, and he is said to be partaking of the 'cup of the feast'.

After a little time has elapsed the man who presides at the feast says: "The little divinity has now finished eating; come, ye friends, let us worship". He then takes the cup, salutes it, and divides the contents—a very small portion of each—among all the assembled guests, for it seems absolutely essential that every person, young and old alike, should take a little.

As soon as the flesh has been sufficiently cooked it is shared out among the people present, and every member of the company partakes of some however little it may be. Every particle of the bear, bones excepted, formerly had to be eaten up, even to the entrails, though this rule is now relaxed. The head of the bear is at last detached from the skin and taken to the *nusa* heap, where it is placed among the other skulls. A tall pole is here set up having a fork in the top, the prongs of which are ornamented with *inao*".[11]

A similar ceremony was, according to J.G. Frazer,[12] observed by Dr. B. Scheube, which will be quoted here as it contains many details which are missing in the description given by J. Batchelor:

> "On entering the hut I found about thirty Ainu present, men, women, and children, all dressed at their best. The master of the house first offered a libation on the fireplace to the god of fire, and the guests followed his example. Then a libation was offered to the house-god in his sacred corner of the hut. Meanwhile the housewife, who had nursed the bear sat by herself, silent and sad, bursting now and then into tears. Her grief was obviously

unaffected, and it deepened as the festival went on. Next, the master of the house and some of his guests went out of the hut and offered libations before the bear's cage. A few drops were presented to the bear in a saucer, which he at once upset. Then the women and girls danced round the cage, their faces turned towards it, their knees slightly bent, rising and hopping on their toes. As they danced they clapped their hands and sang a monotonous song. The housewife and a few old women, who might have nursed many bears, danced tearfully, stretching out their arms to the bear, and addressed it in terms of endearment. The young folks were less affected; they laughed as well as sang. Disturbed by the noise, the bear began to rush about his cage and howl lamentably. Next libations were offered at the *inao* (*inabos*) or sacred wands which stand outside of an Ainu hut. These wands are about a couple of feet high, and are whittled at the top into spiral shavings. Five new wands with bamboo leaves attached to them had been set up for the festival. This is regularly done when a bear is killed; the leaves mean that the animal may come to life again. Then the bear was led out of his cage, a rope was thrown around his neck, and he was led about in the neighbourhood of the hut. While this was being done the men, headed by a chief, shot at the beast with arrows tipped with wooden buttons. Dr. Scheube had to do also. Then the bear was taken before the sacred wands, a stick was put into his mouth, nine men knelt on him and pressed his neck against a beam. In five minutes the animal had expired without uttering a sound. Meantime the women and girls had taken post behind the men, where they danced, lamenting, and beating the men who were killing the bear. The bear's carcase was next placed on the mat before the sacred wands; and a sword and quiver, taken from the wands, were hung around the beast's neck. Being a she-bear, it was also adorned with a necklace and ear-rings. Then food and drink were offered to it, in the shape of millet-broth, millet-cakes, and a pot of *sake*. The men now sat down on mats before the dead bear, offered libations to it, and drank deep. Meanwhile the women and girls had laid aside all marks of sorrow, and danced merrily, none more merrily than the old women. When the mirth was at its height two young Ainu, who had led the bear out of his cage, mounted the roof of the hut and threw cakes of millet among the company, who all scrambled for them without distinction of age or sex. The bear was next skinned and disembowelled, and the trunk severed from the head, to which the skin was left hanging. The blood, caught in cups, was eagerly swallowed by the men. None of the women or children appeared to drink the blood, though custom did not forbid them to do so. The liver was cut in small pieces and eaten raw, with salt, the women and children getting their share. The flesh and the rest of the vitals were taken into the house to be kept till the next day but one, and then to be divided among the persons who had been present at the feast. Blood and liver were offered to Dr. Scheube. While the bear was being disembowelled, the women and girls danced the same dance which they had danced at the beginning—not, however, round the cage, but in front of the sacred wands. At this dance the old women, who had been merry a moment before, again shed tears freely. After the brain had been extracted from the bear's head and swallowed with salt, the skull, detached from the skin, was hung on a pole beside the sacred wands. The stick with which the bear had been engaged was attached to the pole, and so were the sword and quiver which had been hung around the carcase. The latter were removed in about an hour, but the wands remained standing. The whole company, men and women, danced noisily before the pole; and another drinking-bout, in which the women joined, closed the festival."

"The Aino of Saghalien rear bear cubs and kill them with similar ceremonies. We are told that they do not look upon the bear as a god but only as a messenger whom they despatch with various commissions to the god of the forest. The animal is kept for about two years in a cage, and then killed at a festival, which always takes place in winter and at night."[13]

The Gilyak, a Tungusian people of eastern Siberia, hold a bear-festival of the same sort once a year in January. Frazer[14] describes the ceremonies which are very similar to those of the Ainu, and then continues, "When the house has been arranged and decorated for their reception, the skins of the bears, with their heads attached to them, are brought into it, not however by the door, but through a window, and then hung on a sort of scaffold opposite the hearth on which the flesh is to be cooked." Then a banquet is held on the bear's flesh. "After the bones have been picked clean they were put back in the kettle in which the flesh had been boiled. And when the festal meal was over, an old man took his stand at the door of the house with a branch of fir in his hand, with which, as the people passed out, he gave a light blow to every one who had eaten of the bear's flesh or fat, perhaps as a punishment for their treatment of the worshipful animal."

In addition to the Ainu and Gilyak the following other tribes also celebrate a bear festival of the same sort: the ancient Finns and the Lapps, the Ostyak and Wogul, the tribes of the Jenissei, the north-eastern Palaeo-Siberians, the Red-Indians on the north-west coast (Tlingit, Kwakiutl and Nutka) and the northern Algonquin[15].

These tribes treat the captured bear in a manner which differs little from adoration.[16]

An explanation of this bear sacrifice is attempted by A. Slawik in one of his articles: "The other world of the Ainu is the land of the gods (*kamui-mashiri*). In the land of the gods the gods live looking like human beings just as men live on earth. Some of these gods descend or ascend to the Ainu and remain long with them.

The gods, the *kamui*, assume, when they approach human beings, a disguise (*hayokpe*); the deity dominating over the mountain country (*kimun-kamui*) "wraps" himself into a bear, the deity of the high sea (*repun-kamui*) into a sword-fish or dolphin, the village deity (*kotan-koro-kamui*) into an owl. Other gods take the disguise of a fish, an insect, a field fruit or other edible plant, even of lifeless objects. Each deity can, "wrapped in" a certain object, go to human beings and bring them something useful, but in certain cases also something harmful. For the orthodox Ainu, life is good if the gods (*kamui*) give plenty of food, bring many goods for living, or, in other words, if as many deities as possible often come in the disguise of things to the Ainu which are important for good living. For this reason the Ainu thank the gods before eating, take good care of the leavings at table and of things not required, and "send" them back into the land of the gods that they may again return to them when required. For instance, the deity of the mountain country comes to the Ainu in the disguise of a bear. The warm skin and the tasty blood and meat of this animal are very valuable and much wanted things for the Ainu. The successful Ainu hunter removes the skin of the bear and clothes himself with it; he drinks the blood, eats the flesh and sucks with his tongue the marrow from the bones. The bear's skull, however, is stuck on the fence of the gods (*nushasan, nusasan*) near the hut, and sacred wands (*inau*) are erected at its side. Liquor and a meal are prepared and many other articles provided, and with them the *kamui*, the bear-*kamui* is sent back into the land of heaven. The bear-*kamui* is supposed to give an account of his experiences in the land of the Ainu to the many other *kamui* and praise the good reception which it received from the Ainu. The result will be that the other *kamui* too will want to go to the land of the Ainu when they have heard of that.

This solemn "sending-back, sending-away, leading-away" of the *kamui* into his land of the gods is called *iomante*.

Into the framework of the *iomante* fits also the "sending-away" of human beings which in old times was practised by the Ainu of the province Tokuchi. In the inaccessible mountainous valleys of this region it was in winter when the snow was very high and when the hunting of deer was therefore impossible and very difficult to secure food. For this reason all the old persons who could not work anymore were killed and their flesh was eaten. For this a solemn *iomante* was celebrated similarly to the one for the "sending-off" of the bear. This is the reason why even to this date the Ainu of Tokachi are called cannibals by the other people and are as such despised. This was however only a local and limited phenomenon which was necessary due to economic distress, not a general custom." So far A. Slawik.

A new moment is added to this whole sacrificial complex if the sacrificial animal is no more a more or less tamed bear, but a bear which has been killed on a hunting expedition. The fear of the revenge of the bear or of its spirit causes the performance of ceremonies which seem to have first of all the purpose to reconcile either the bear with its fate or to deceive it about the person of the killer (or hunter).

### THE BEAR FESTIVAL OF THE WOGUL

The Wogul of north-eastern Siberia celebrate a feast after a successful hunting expedition in which a bear was killed which Artturi Kannisto has described as follows:[17]

The bear festival is held in the house of the hunter who invites to it also people from the neighbouring villages. The feast lasts several days; the guests are entertained by the host.

The programme of the first day consists of two parts: first the so-called "bear songs" ballads are recited, which are intended to entertain the bear and the guests present. These are succeeded by scenes which are intended to deceive the bear about the identity of the actors. It also is avoided to mention the bear, to speak about it, and if this is necessary the Wogul use substitutes and paraphrases of the word 'bear'.

After these ceremonies at night the head of the bear which was placed on a table in the hut is covered with a cloth. The singer of the bear ballads passes the night at the side of the bear.

On the fourth day a sacrifice is performed in honour of the bear. The master of the house and another hunter lead a young reindeer before the bear and pass the leading rope below the left paw of the bear, as if the bear itself had brought the victim along. The men standing around nod with their head to the bear. Then the rope is removed and while one of the two men holds the animal the other gives it a blow with an axe in its back. The animal falls and is despatched with a stab into the heart.[18] While the victim makes its last jerks, the killer pours himself a glass of liquor and empties the glass in one draught, but the last drops he pours on the spine of the bear. Then he offers a drink to all guests attending the ceremony, even to his wife. Again the people nod to each other, then they skin the reindeer, but leave the leg stumps attached to the skin. The victim is then cut up and the pieces of meat are cooked in a kettle.

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When the meat is cooked, the pieces are served in bowls after they have first been offered to the bear. The flesh is eaten with rye-broth and fish-fat. As usually, the women eat separately. Then there is more singing of the bear ballads, dancing, and dramatic performances.

In the last, the "holy" night, five songs and other dramatic plays are succeeded by scenes which apparently have the purpose to frighten the bear and to urge him to depart. As soon as the Wogul have come to the conclusion that the bear is now ready to leave them, the animal is invited through other pantomimes to return and to visit the house again where the feast had been celebrated.

Ultimately they remove the body of the bear from the table or bench where it rested all the time and place it on the ground. A woman starts to take leave of it and with words stifled by tears kisses its right paw, and after her the other women follow her example. The men fondle the head of the bear, kiss its forehead and left paw. Then the bear's body is carried outside; the master of the house pretends to object to it vehemently. In the open they hold a general snow-ball match and when the turmoil is strongest two men take the table on which the bear is lying and carry it back into the house. Again the head of the celebrating house protests. The table is put down, and the head of the bear is turned towards the sun. The men grip each other at the chest, shouting loudly. This is apparently done to divert the attention of the bear. Meanwhile two masked men creep into the house to steal the "raven". They are chased away, but return and at last succeed in throwing the bear around so "that it cannot see anything anymore". It is the raven which is blamed for this wickedness.

After that the bear is completely skinned, since in the forest, after killing the animal, the skinning had only begun. If a Russian or any other stranger is present, he is asked by the Wogul to cut the spine of the animal into two parts with an axe. No Wogul will do that; if no outsider is at hand, the Wogul will carefully extract with a knife all the single vertebrates without injuring the bones. Then a fire is lit, a kettle is hung over it and the meat, heart and head of the bear cooked in it. Pieces of the animal's back are cooked separately and served to the women.

Before the meal is served, the master of the celebrating house cuts a strip of flesh around the snout of the bear, wraps one end around his thumb, and offers the other end to a guest who also wraps it around his thumb. Then both men hold a tug-of-war panting loudly. Whoever ultimately wins, takes the strip of flesh, but gives a part of it to the loser. While doing this, he makes crowing sounds—again blaming the raven for it. As Uno Harva remarks, this custom is found among many races so that the conclusion is not out of place that it is a very old custom. It is probably an act of precaution, which is confirmed by the words of the bear ballad: "I remove the snout of the bear so that it may not be able to smell".

Further ceremonies follow. At last, when the head is picked clean and the bare skull is left, it is wrapped in a white linen and hung up in a tree of the sacred fence of the village.

## SUMMARY

Like the horse in the vedic sacrifice, the bear in the sacrificial complex of the Ainus, Woguls and other Siberian tribes is dispatched into the other world as a messenger to ask the Supreme God or the "Lord of the Animals", or to persuade the spirits of the animals themselves to visit the tribes in animal disguise and to be the providers of bounty, or at least for sufficient food. The bear, like the horse, is solemnly dedicated and venerated as divine, kept for some considerable time in human company and treated with special care until the time of sacrifice. In both sacrificial complexes the victim is persuaded to consent to the sacrifice and sending off into the other world. The method of despatch of the messenger into the abode of the gods and spirits is preferably by suffocation, because the breath, the principle of life, should remain in the victim's body, as also its blood.

In both sacrificial complexes the spilling of blood is to be avoided, at least until the victim's spirit has left its body. For it is believed that the spirit lingers on in the body even after death and must be sent off by special rites.

A common meal in which the sacrificial meat is consumed unites all participants in great solemnity and largesse. At least in the Siberian feast there is also a lavish supply of intoxicating drinks. But even the Vedic Indians enjoyed their *soma*! Some entertainment followed with a liberal distribution of gifts.

Such numerous parallels in the ceremonies of both sacrificial complexes suggest that there was a similar ideology at the basis of both sacrifices. Obviously it is that of the belief in a divine mediator, or messenger, incorporated either in the Vedic horse as *prajapati*, or as the Siberian bear spirit, even as the "Lord of the Animals" himself, to be sent into the abode of the gods and spirits to plead for the patron of the feast or the whole community, to bestow fertility on man and beast, and prosperity and ample food supply for the Siberian tribes, and honour and victory on the Vedic king. The sacrifice was also performed for protection from misfortune and disease, for forgiveness of sins, in particular among the Siberians the sin of killing the bear. Only the manner of appeasement of the victim for its killing is different: While the Siberian tribes try to deceive the victim about the identity of the killers, in the Vedic sacrifice the victim is invited to have sexual congress with the main wife of the king!

There exists some doubt about the origin of this sacrificial complex. It is not clear whether it originated among the nomadic animal breeders (to whom the Vedic Indians undoubtedly belonged) or the primitive Siberian hunters. The greater simplicity of the Siberian bear sacrifice would suggest that the Vedic horse sacrifice evolved out of the Siberian bear sacrifice, but nowadays anthropologists believe that the Siberian primitive hunters perhaps had a culturally superior past in a southern environment from which they were driven out and forced to migrate to northern Siberia and adapt to its frozen and uninviting land.

## NOTES

1. W. Schmidt, 1930, 246.
2. Fr. Bornemann, 1938, 53.
3. A. Gahs, 1924/5 and 1928/9, 59 f.
4. Kai Donner, 1926, 194.
5. W. Radloff, 1893, I, 128 f.; II, 75 f.
6. W. Schmidt, 1926, 134.
7. Apparently the Ainu have very little in common with the other races of North-East Asia. B.D. Howard who in 1893 wrote a book on the Ainu, proposed on p. 184 f. and p. 206 f. the theory that the Ainu were Aryans, and belonged to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-German

racial group. He defended his rather imaginary opinion that the Ainu were descendants of the Indian *Vanaprasthas*, Brahmins, who in their old age had retreated into solitude and devoted their life for meditation.

8. J. Batchelor, 1901, 481-94.
9. *Cf.* L. Sternberg, 1906, 434 f.
10. H.S. Landor also relates (1898, 456) that the bear is killed by the Ainu either through suffocation or an arrow shot through its heart. *Cf.* also: H.S. Landor, 1893, 281 f.
11. J. Batchelor, 1901, 481-94.
12. J.G. Frazer, 1936, VIII, 185 f.
13. *Cf.* J.G. Frazer, 1936, VIII, 188.
14. J.G. Frazer, 1936, VIII, 190, 193, 195.
15. A. Gahs, 1928, 260.
16. J.G. Frazer, 1928, 747.
17. A. Kannisto, 1938-39, 21-39.
18. If the animal is killed by a stab to the heart very little blood is drawn. Where the victim is no more killed by suffocation or by a blow to the head, the stab to the heart is used.

## 5

# THE SOLEMN PIG SACRIFICE OF THE GONDS AND BAIGAS

THE bear sacrifice of the Ainus and Woguls which had been described in the preceding chapter, finds a strange parallel in a solemn pig sacrifice of some tribes resident in Central India, the Gonds and Baigas. They are, however, no more mere nomadic hunters and food gatherers, but have been forced to become plough cultivators by the Government. By tradition they were shifting cultivators, that is to say that they were in an intermediary stage of material culture, between primitive hunters and agriculturists. As they did not plough, they did not own cattle; their most important domestic animals were the pig and fowls. Living preferably near a forest, often in hilly country, they used to burn down a plot of forest, sow their seeds by means of a digging stick into the ashes, and watch the crops grow. After the harvest they were free to collect jungle produce, plants, fruits and tubers, to cut wood for sale, for their own use and for fuel. They also hunted wild game and caught fish. Thus their life was less monotonous and much freer than that of plough cultivators.

Land was often used communely and periodically redistributed by the village council, and shifting cultivators easily gave up their fields and shifted to another village or started a new settlement. But while primitive hunters preferred to live in small groups, shifting cultivators lived often in large joint families and formed clans which developed into phratries.

In religion they venerate still a high god and other minor gods, but also goddesses, such as the earth-mother, a village goddess and goddesses of epidemic diseases. They believe strongly in spirits of nature which are either benevolent or malignant, and must be venerated and appeased by frequent offerings and sacrifices.

Thus the Gonds and Baigas residing in the Vindhya mountains of Central India venerate a male house and family god, *Narayan Deo*. His particular feast, called *laru kaj*, shows many features of the bear sacrifice of the Woguls. But the sacrificial victim is a pig, the most important domestic animal of the Gonds and Baigas in the time of shifting cultivation.

## According to the Author's Research

The head of every Gond and Baiga family should perform every ninth or twelfth year a solemn pig sacrifice in honour of *Narayan Deo*.[1] Its purpose is to secure the god's protection for the family and house against sickness and misfortune. The god is worshipped in this particular manner to make the family prosperous and happy. Sometimes *Narayan Deo* makes a member of the family sick, just to remind them that the sacrifice is due. Through a soothsayer, the god makes it known that he wants the sacrifice of a pig. The animal which *Narayan Deo* wants in his honour is a young unblemished male pig, and the sacrifice is accompanied by a rich and complicated ritual.

If the family cannot afford a pig, *Narayan Deo* will be satisfied with the sacrifice of a black cock. This sacrifice is performed soon after the promise is made to the god. Only the members of the family attend the ceremony. Before the cock is killed, it is made to pick some grains. If it refuses to eat, it is a proof that *Narayan Deo* wants another victim. But if the cock picks up only a few grains, its head is pushed into a hole in the floor just inside the threshold of the main room. Then the hole around the victim's head is quickly filled with mud till the cock dies of suffocation. Then the cock is taken into the courtyard and its head is cut off. The blood is allowed to drop to the ground. The meat is boiled in the house and eaten with a dish of rice by the family members without any further ceremonies.

The ceremonial of the solemn pig sacrifice is a more elaborate affair. The pig sacrifice is called *laru kaj*, 'the pig's wedding'. The pig represents *Narayan Deo*, and the sacrifice is its 'Wedding'. Nowadays this sacrifice is celebrated after long intervals, because Gonds and Baigas often cannot afford the heavy expenses of such a sacrifice. Also, they know that their Hindu neighbours do not approve of pig sacrifices. In some places they have substituted a goat for the pig, but more often they omit the sacrifice altogether.

It appears that this sacrifice is a typical Gond rite. The other tribes who also celebrate it have adopted it from the Gonds. It is not known how the Gonds learned to perform this ritual which is so similar to the bear sacrifice of the Wogul and Ainu. It resembles it much more than the *aśvamedha* horse sacrifice of the Vedic Aryans though the latter are so much nearer to the Gonds.

## THE DEDICATION OF THE PIG

When a Gond or Baiga has made up his mind to offer a pig in sacrifice to *Narayan Deo*, he selects a young male pig, about a month old, from his own litter or from that of another man. The animal must be very young because it should never yet have covered a sow. The animal need not be a domestic pig. The Gonds and Baigas sometimes catch young wild pigs which they rear with their herds. Such pigs can also be selected for sacrifice.

On the day of dedication to *Narayan Deo*, the head of the family invites the brother or father of his wife. These affines play an important role in the ritual of the pig sacrifice. The pig selected for the sacrifice is brought and the head of the family pours some rice on the ground before the animal. If the pig eats the rice at once, it is accepted as a sign that *Narayan Deo* is well pleased with this particular animal. If the pig refuses to eat the rice, it is coaxed for a while, but in the end the rice is forced down the throat of the stubborn animal. When the pig has swallowed the rice, the head of the family prays: "It is yours, *Narayan*!" Along with the *laru*, another young pig or a cock is chosen and dedicated in the same manner. The cock must be of white colour, this victim is dedicated to the Sun-god, who is supposed to be *Narayan Deo's* brother. But more often it is a pigling that is dedicated to the Sun-god.

After the dedication of the pig, the affines of the celebrating family cut off two inches of the tail and a piece of the right or left ear of both victims. Then they castrate the animals, cutting a part of the penis and crushing the testicles between two pieces of wood. The parts cut off are buried inside the house near one corner of the main entrance.

The sacrifice of the pig takes place any time after the dedication ceremony, but usually at least a year passes before it is actually sacrificed. But they cannot wait too long, or the boar gets too strong and they find it difficult to kill the pig according to customary rites.

Usually the *laru* is allowed to run free with the other pigs, though some people keep it locked up in a shed or enclosure. But the animal is especially looked after by the mistress of the celebrating house. The *laru* is well fed; it gets all the leavings of the family's meals. On the day of dedication the pig is served first, before the members of the family. Neighbours and fellow villagers, however, do not seem to treat the sacred animal with deference; they chase it away if it comes into their courtyard or garden.

If the *laru* is killed by a tiger or snake, another animal must be provided in its place. But the Gonds believe that no animal attacks a *laru*, because it is grazed by *Narayan Deo* himself. Even if the *laru* goes astray and does not return to its sty for the night, its owner does not worry, for he is sure that no harm will befall *Narayan Deo's* charge.

If the man who dedicated the pig to *Narayan Deo* dies before he can fulfil his promise, his son or another close relative must perform the sacrifice. The widow or daughter of the house however cannot perform the ceremony.

As long as the *laru* is in the house, *Narayan Deo* is supposed to protect the family in a special way and cures them soon if a natural sickness might befall them.

## THE SACRIFICE

The best time for the pig sacrifice is soon after the harvest when the bins are full and there is money in the house. But it can be celebrated any time of the year except in the month of Baisakh (April-May) when no offering is made to any god. The pig sacrifice should take place on a Tuesday or Saturday.

A few days previous to the real feast, the nearest relatives of the celebrating family, members of their own kin as well as relatives by marriage, are invited to attend the sacrifice. All fellow villagers, and neighbours and friends from other villages are also invited. A wealthy man invites many guests, a poor man only his nearest relatives and fellow villagers. No uninvited guest should turn up, to avoid any embarrassment for the host.

On the morning of the feast day, or at least in the afternoon, when all outside guests have arrived, the celebration of the sacrifice begins with the sacrifice of the pig or cock dedicated to the Sun-god. This is done outside in the garden by the head of the celebrating family or by the village priest. The sacrificer prays: "Sun-god, take what is due to you!" The victim is beheaded with an axe.

After that, the body is cut up and the meat boiled in a pot and eaten with rice. Soon afterwards, the *laru* itself is brought, let loose and chased by several men, finally caught and brought to the main door of the house. The pig is fed three tasty cakes. As soon as it has devoured the cakes, its snout is painted with turmeric, as in a wedding.

Then the animal is dragged to the threshold of the main door. The struggling victim is thrown on its back upon a heavy beam of wood lying across the threshold. Its front legs are tied together, then its hind legs. One man now pulls the front legs of the pig over its head with a strong rope, while another man pulls the hind legs in the opposite direction. Finally another equally heavy beam is placed across the belly of the pig. Then five men at either side of the beam—some inside the room, some outside—press their whole weight on the beam, and thus crush the animal between the two beams. Rocking up and down, they keep their balance holding on to the doorposts and the wall of the house. While the men kill the pig in this manner, someone pours boiling water into the pig's mouth. If the animal does not die at once, another man takes a rice pounder and beats it against the pig's head.

In some villages, the pig is killed in a different manner: After tying the legs of the pig, it is lifted by the hind legs and its head is pushed into a hole filled with boiling water in front of the door. The pig's head is several times bumped into the hole with great force. Then the hole is quickly filled with mud, which is rammed down vigorously till the victim ceases struggling and dies of suffocation in the mud. It is believed by the Gonds and Baigas that *Narayan Deo* is in the pig at the moment of its sacrifice.

While the men are killing the pig, the women chant abuse and obscenities at them and throw refuse on them. The master of ceremonies—a kinsman of the host s wife—invokes meanwhile *Narayan Deo*, his four brothers and their mother Kotma. Sometimes the official village priest acts as master of ceremonies, but then the kinsman of the host's wife acts as his assistant. He is a prominent accessory in the sacrifice.

As soon as the pig has breathed its last, it is taken outside into the garden behind the house. There it is held over a fire and its bristles are singed. Then the pig is carried back into the courtyard where an oblong pit is dug. Stout planks are laid over the pit and over them a bamboo mat. The pig is laid on the mat and scrubbed clean. Then it is carried into the house and placed on a heap of leaves. There the pig is cut up; its head is severed from the body and laid aside, the liver and intestines are also cleaned and washed. The phallus of the pig is cut out and thrown into the pit. If any drops of blood are spilled on the floor, the mud that got soaked is carefully scooped up and thrown into the pit. But it is said that the *laru* usually bleeds very little—it is too fat.

Meanwhile a portion of the floor near the wall in the house of the celebrating family has been cleared and coated with cattle dung or with white clay. Then with rice or wheat flour a *swastika* is drawn on the clean spot. The *swastika* is very simple—two crossed lines, forming an X. In its centre they pour a small pile of uncooked rice. At the side of it, but still on the *swastika*, they place the head of the pig in such a position that its snout points upward to the *phulera* hanging over it. Then a thin slice of the pig's fat is cut off from its back and put into its mouth. Sometimes it is covered with its own entrails.

The *phulera* (flower box) is a small mat hanging on four threads fixed on the wall. On the mat they place five cakes of lentil baked in oil. It is believed that *Narayan Deo* is present in the *phulera* and in the lentil cakes. *Phul* (flower) can also have the meaning of 'soul', thus *phulera* can mean: 'container of the soul'. The *phulera* is sacred and should not be touched by any one. Then a song is sung inviting *Narayan Deo* to come, for everything is ready for his reception. A woman is called to clean the carpet on which *Narayan Deo* is to sit during the feast.

Then the master of ceremonies is led to the *phulera* and offers some boiled grains and some pieces of liver on the pile of rice on the *swastika*. *Narayan Deo* is invited to eat the offerings. After him the head of the celebrating family and all his male kinsmen and affines also offer grain and pieces of liver. Then the master of ceremonies sits down near the *phulera* to watch it. The other guests approach and offer small coins on the *swastika*. Now the meat of the sacrificial pig and *kodai* grain (a small grain) are boiled in a huge vessel, but the liver is cooked in a separate pot. During all these ceremonies songs are sung in praise of *Narayan Deo*.

When dinner is ready, all invited guests come and sit down on the verandah of the house; this meal is never served in the open. The whole pig is eaten by the guests, except some portions of the pig's fat which is extracted over a fire and melted into oil later to be used in religious ceremonies in an earthen lamp. After the dinner liquor is served to men and women. Then they might get jolly and start singing and dancing till the sun rises.

Everything that remains over after the meal is carefully collected and put into the oblong pit dug in the courtyard for this purpose. Even the leaf platters on which the food had been served are thrown into the pit and not left to the dogs, as in other dinners. All this time the *phulera* must be watched by the master of ceremonies or his substitute and a boy assisting the master of ceremonies.

On the following day no ceremonies are performed and the guests indulge in eating and drinking and dancing. This is so if the host is wealthy and can afford to entertain his guests for three days. If he is rather poor and short of money, the feast will come to an end on the second day already.

In the morning of the day when the feast is continued the guests make their toilet and then assemble at the house of the celebrating family. Two men approach the boy who is watching the *phulera* and grasp his right leg. The master of ceremonies takes a plate on which there are grains of rice floating on water. Holding the leaf plate with both hands he waves it in a circle over the boy's foot, while the two men holding the boy's leg move it simultaneously in a circle. While the master of ceremonies pours the contents of the leaf platter over the pig's head on the *swastika* the men are singing asking *Narayan Deo* to eat of the offerings. But suddenly the two men holding the boy's leg suddenly push it with great force against the pig's head so that it tumbles over and falls backward. At once the men lift the boy to his feet and carry him out of the house. Other men take the head of the *laru* and place it on a heap of green leaves. There they crush the skull bones, take out the brain and with the other fleshy parts of the head throw everything into a large earthen vessel. Then they carefully gather the pile of rice on the *swastika*, and pour it also into the vessel. Then the vessel is put on a fire and cooked with rice. When it is ready a meal is served to all the guests. The meal is called memorial dinner. According to some informants, the women are not permitted to partake of this meal.

At the dinner the wife of the host approaches her husband and formally asks him for her reward for taking care of the *laru*. The host gives her a piece of pork and some rice. Pieces of the meat are also sent to friends and prominent men of the tribe in other villages who were prevented from attending the feast for some reason.

When dinner is over the guests get boisterous and indulge in practical jokes. The host puts some meat of the *laru* and rice on a plate and carries it to the master of ceremonies standing near the *phulera*. Holding a strip of the skin of the *laru* in his hand, he hits out at two men trying to snatch some morsels of meat from the platter which the host is holding in his hand. The master of ceremonies chases them away beating them with the strip of skin, singing all the while and accusing them of having killed the *laru*. According to some informants, the master of ceremonies takes the bladder of the *laru*, blows it up and ties it up with a string. With the bladder and strip of skin he dances with the boy around the *phulera*. While the boy dances he also tries snatching morsels of meat from the plate. The dance continues until boy and master of ceremonies are breathless.

The exact meaning of this ceremony is not clear. But from verses sung during the dance it appears that the master of ceremonies accuses the boy and the two men of killing the sacrificial pig and wants to punish them. The intention is to deceive the spirit of the sacrificed animal as to the true identity of its slayers.

This deception is carried further by the following ceremony: Some of the men begin to break a hole through the wall near the door and all, first the dancers and then the onlookers, escape through it into the courtyard. After a while all return; but this time they enter the house by the door, obviously pretending that they are different from those who escaped from the house through the hole in the wall.

Now some boys come riding on hobby-horses made of sticks with rags tied around the top-ends as heads. They beat the people sitting around the pit in the courtyard with the tail ends of their hobby horse. They pretend to come from far riding around the pit and chased by the master of ceremonies. Then they pretend to ride away; at some distance they throw away their hobby horses and return. This is again a pretence to confuse the spirit of the *laru* and to suggest that riders coming from far had committed the killing.

After that the master of ceremonies takes the *phulera* down and with the skull bones places it on a leaf plate. He takes everything outside and throws it into the pit, which he fills quickly with earth and levels with the ground. The strings on which the *phulera* had been hanging are cut into pieces and tied around the wrists of the attending male guests.

The master of ceremonies, usually the father or brother of the host's wife sits down on the door-step. He calls for the mistress of the house who asks him what he wants. He asks for his reward and she gives him about ten pounds of the *laru* pork.

Elwin too states that the sacrifice of the pig to *Narayan Deo* is called a wedding.

Elwin emphasises that for the Baiga the pig is still an extremely useful and popular domestic animal, though it has lost this importance now for the Gond who for fear of the Hindus now abstain from eating pork and often give up sacrificing a pig to *Narayan Deo*. But where the *laru kaj* is still celebrated the victim must be a young boar.

Elwin's description of the ritual of consecration differs little from my description of the ceremony.

According to Elwin, the time interval between dedication and sacrifice is three years. By the time of sacrifice the animal is fully grown.

According to Elwin the dedicated pig is offered the best food, but not the leavings of the family's meals. Usually the pig is separated from the herd of pigs and kept locked up in a pigsty. If it dies before it can be sacrificed it must be replaced by another pig. If somebody by mistake kills it, he must replace it or *Narayan Deo* will punish him. Elwin also confirms that *Narayan Deo* protects the family which has dedicated the pig from sickness and misfortune, until the sacrifice is performed. But he insists that the main purpose of the *laru kaj* is to obtain a cure.

Elwin agrees that the head of the celebrating family has to invite the kinsmen of his wife and of his daughters-in-law. His brother-in-law or a son-in-law acts usually as master of ceremonies. The two old men who prepare the *phulera* are usually the grand-parents of the host.

Elwin also emphasises the importance of a lavish display of hospitality and liberality, with plenty of food and liquor, and other entertainment, even to the extent that the host has to borrow money to make the feast a success.

When the sacrifice is about to take place, the pig is chased, caught and dragged to the door of the house, where it must swallow a few grains of rice. Then it is tied up. A light in an earthen saucer is waved three times over the victim. Then the snout of the pig is opened by means of two sticks and more rice is pushed into the pig. Then boiling water is poured on its phallus in such a manner that the water flows into the pit dug in front of the door. Then three men lift the victim up by its hind legs, stick its head into the pit in front of the door half full of water, and quickly fill the hole with mud around the head. Then the victim is vigorously pushed up and down. This however would scarcely amount for the animal's death which is rather due to suffocation.

Meanwhile women and girls shout and sing obscene songs and use other offensive words; they throw rubbish and dung on the officiating men.

Elwin believes that the *laru kaj* must be considered to be the oldest cultic act of the Gond and Baiga because the death of the pig is brought about by suffocation. He believes that this way of killing was applied because the tribes had no cutting implements of iron or any other metal. But in this assumption he is scarcely correct. Killing the victim by suffocation or crushing its body is done for the purpose of retaining the breath in the body, for breath is the seat of life and of the soul in the body. The manner of killing an animal by suffocation is a typical form of sacrifice among the old cattle-, reindeer- and horse-breeding races. While the agrarian races prefer bloody sacrifices with much spilling of blood, because for them blood is the seat of life, these earlier tribes, in Siberia as well as in Central India, see the principle of life in breath. They are averse to shedding blood. This manner of killing animals in sacrifice, but even for food, is known to have been practised by the ancient Vedic Indians, by the old Persians, Skythes, Chinese, and Tibetans. It is still common among the Altai tribes, the Palaeo-Siberians, even among African cattle breeders like the Masais, Nandis and others. The method of suffocating or crushing the victim is perhaps the oldest rite in profane killing as in sacrifice, not because these people did not have stabbing or cutting weapons, but because they did not want to spill blood.[2]

Finally follows a sacrificial and laudatory hymn in *Narayan Deo*'s praise. If the *phulera* begins to swing by itself on the wall, all are happy and believe that *Narayan Deo* himself is present and makes his presence known. Again they begin to sing obscene songs and make indecent allusions. Some men get "possessed" by the gods. The other guests keep singing, shouting obscenities and drinking heavily.

Elwin does not mention any other accompanying sacrifices and libations at the *laru kaj*.

Elwin does not mention the bath of the master of ceremonies.

He does not describe any other rites after the sacrifice, but makes much of the sacrificial dinner that follows, with an ample supply of liquor. After that the guests pass the night by dancing.

### THE *LARU KAJ* AS DESCRIBED BY S. HIVALE

In 1946 Shamrao Hivale published his monograph on the Pardhan[3], the bards and minstrels of the Gond. Hivale gives in his book a detailed description of the *laru kaj* as it is performed by the Pardhan. The fact that the Pardhan too celebrate the *laru kaj* is no proof that this sacrifice is not of Gond origin, for the Pardhan live in close economic dependence on the Gond and naturally have adopted also Gond religion and cultural habits. In fact, they claim to be degraded Gond.

Hivale does not state expressly that the solemn pig sacrifice must be performed periodically by the Pardhan. But in the narration of the legends which explain the origin of the sacrifice he states several times "the Pardhans felt that the performance of the sacrifice was due". But he also states that the Pardhan perform this sacrifice only when they have been warned by *Narayan Deo* who sends them sickness or misfortune. The Pardhan are reluctant to perform the sacrifice because they usually can ill afford the high expenses for this sacrifice.

According to Hivale the head of the family is the feast's organiser.

Hivale states that the victim in the *laru kaj* is always a pig.

The *laru kaj* is offered to *Narayan Deo*. Hivale treats at some length the problem whether *Narayan Deo* is a sun-god or not. He also comes to the conclusion that the Pardhans, Gonds and Baigas do not identify their *Narayan Deo* with the sun-god of the Hindus. He believes that the addressee of the *laru kaj* has later received the Hindu name *Narayan Deo*. He believes that originally the god was simply a disease demon[4]. Towards the end of the chapter Hivale mentions nine points of agreement of this sacrifice with the ritual of *Satya Narayan Katha*, a Hindu ritual of sun worship. The main rite, however, the pig sacrifice, is absent in the Hindu ritual. Still, there must have been some connection between the Sun-god of the Hindus and the house god *Narayan* or the *Narayan Deo* of the Pardhan, Gond and Baiga. But how these two gods are connected is not yet known.

Hivale admits that the purpose of the sacrifice is not solely protection against sickness and misfortune, but also that women may give birth to many children.

The occasion for the sacrifice is some misfortune, a sickness, or sterility of the wife.

Hivale does not mention that for a poor man a cock can be substituted for a pig's sacrifice.

Hivale states expressly that the *laru kaj* is regarded as a wedding of *Narayan Deo*.

The victim must be a young boar, without fault or wound; it should not yet have covered a sow.

Hivale describes the dedication of the victim in much the same way as my informants did to me. The pig selected for the sacrifice must eat rice grains offered by the host; then it is castrated and a piece of its tail is cut off.

The time interval between dedication and sacrifice is three years.

The animal once dedicated is considered to be the "carrier" of *Narayan Deo*. For this reason it enjoys special veneration. It is treated with great care and affection. The wife of the feast's organiser stands in a specially intimate relation to the dedicated pig. She feeds it, plays with it, often it sleeps at her side. According to Hivale, the *laru* is always accompanied by one to three "companions", either pigs or white cocks. It is noteworthy that one of these "companions" is called *surya*—the sun. These companions form the pig's guardians and protectors.

The organiser of the feast invites first of all his own relatives and the kinsmen of his wife. But fellow villagers and many other prominent or befriended persons are also invited for the feast. The host and his in-laws play a prominent part in the ritual, and also the master of ceremonies who also looks after the supply of food, of tobacco. He and five helpers assisted by five girls look after the guests.

Hivale too mentions that all guests expect a big display of hospitality though he refrains from calling it a "feast of merit". For there is no mention of the chance that the organiser of the feast acquires after the sacrifice is over, a superior social rank. He admits however that the host of the feast would be sharply criticised and would lose his good reputation if he showed himself stingy in providing food and drinks.

On the day of the sacrifice the companions of the sacred pig are sacrificed first. In the feast which Hivale describes one "companion" only was present. It was a white cock, called "*surya*". Before the cock could be sacrificed it had to eat a few grains of rice. Then it was killed. Hivale does not mention how the cock was despatched. The flesh of the cock was cooked and eaten with rice.

Then all was made ready for the main sacrifice: while five lads and five girls dug a ditch in front of the house, other persons prepared the festive meal. Some elderly persons prepared the mat for the *phulera*. Then some songs were sung which reminded Hivale of wedding or Holi songs.

The ditch in front of the house was holy ground. If something fell into the pit it could not be removed from it. Menstruating women could not attend the feast. But they could be purified if they bathed standing on a mat over the ditch. Sterile women drew water from the sacred pit and bathed in it.

As soon as the sacred pit is ready all those who take an active part in the sacrifice take a bath over the pit and then walk on a carpet of leaves into the house. In the house the *phulera* is hung up on the wall. The master of ceremonies receives the insignia of his office. He says each time when an object is handed over to him: "If any one objects to this and refuses to eat with us, *Narayan Deo* will cut him into pieces and swallow him". After that all dance around the *phulera* which soon begins to swing. The people pretend that *Narayan Deo* has caused the swinging.

Then the sacrifice takes place. After the victim has eaten some grains or pulse, it is caught by five lads, lifted up by the hind legs and its snout pushed into a hole dug in front of the door sill. Five girls quickly fill the hole with water and mud. The pig whose head is repeatedly pushed up and down soon dies of suffocation. The girls begin to sing obscene songs while the other women throw refuse and dung and pour dish-water on the lads killing the pig.

These obscene songs are sung at every wedding. If the *laru kaj* is really considered as a wedding the singing of these songs and the good-natured abuse of the women accompanied by obscene shoutings cannot be taken objection to. It is not necessary to think of a magic significance or of a fertility rite.

It is remarkable that this sacrifice is alleged to be the wedding of a god to a pig. This will be explained later.

The dead victim is now bathed, and its hair singed off. Then the body is cut up. The head is cut off and placed under the *phulera*. The meat for the sacrificial dinner is taken from the pig; nothing should be kept apart except the diaphragm and a long strip of meat and fat which are cut from the back of the pig. All this is placed under the *phulera*.

Meanwhile some rice is cooked with the liver and the entrails of the victim and is given by the master of ceremonies to the wife of the host, as her reward for taking such good care of the pig. The woman eats her meal alone in the courtyard.

The feast lasts until midnight. Till the dinner is ready the guests sing and dance and are otherwise engaged with entertainments.

No other sacrifices are performed.

According to Hivale the master of ceremonies and his assistants bathe already before the sacrifice. The men bathe in hot water and are anointed with turmeric and oil, as in a wedding.

The festive meal after the sacrifice which Hivale attended consisted of rice and the flesh of the sacrificed pig. All guests were told to eat under the *phulera*, else *Narayan Deo* would kill and swallow them.

The feast which Hivale described lasted two days only; there was no day of rest in between.

After the meal on the morning of the second day the victim's head was venerated; it was done in the same manner as the bridal pair is honoured on the day after the wedding.[5] At the same time the people asked the god for his assistance. The officiating priest gave them a few grains of rice as a token that their prayers would be heard.

Then the "feast of the head" began. First the organiser of the feast had to kick three times the head of the pig with his foot and to pray to *Narayan Deo* to leave his family now in peace. Then the skull of the pig was cut into parts with an axe, the brain and all fleshy parts put into a pot and cooked. The skull bones too were put into the same pot. When the dinner was ready some persons with the officiating priest and the five lads sat down around the pot and started eating. But they soon ceased and started an excited dance around the *phulera*. The men then started to spit at the girls who tried to hide behind the grain bins in the house. Hivale states that the men became so rough in order to chase *Narayan Deo* out of the house. At last they broke a hole in the wall to let them get out. Then suddenly they cut all the strings on which the *phulera* was hanging, carried it quickly outside and buried it in the sacred pit. The bones of the victim were also buried in the pit. While the pit was hastily filled with earth, the officiating priest asked the host when he would again perform a *laru kaj*. The man tried an excuse in order to postpone the performance of the next feast, for the expenses of such a feast are high.[6]

Then some lads came riding on hobby-horses. They pretended to come from far. A mock battle developed between them and the girls who were often bothered by the boys also on other occasions. They were beaten, for instance, with the air-filled bladder of the sacrificed pig.

Finally a man appeared on the scene dressed up as a Hindu *sadhu*. He asked for alms. Sacrificial meat was offered to him, but he refused with horror to touch the meat, pretending to be an orthodox Hindu.[7]

## NOTES

1. *Narayan Deo* is the house and family god of the Baigas. He is identified with the youngest of the Pandava brothers.
2. *Cf.* O. Schrader, 1901, II, 136 b; other references in M. Hermanns, 1949, 206 f.
3. S. Hivale, 1946, 125 f.
4. In this statement Hivale is obviously influenced by his friend Elwin. *Cf.* also: S. Hivale, 1944, 100-116, and Elwin's footnote on p. 115 at the end of the article.
5. *Cf.* V. Elwin and S. Hivale, 1944, 199.
6. This would enforce a certain periodicity: the officiating priest urges the host to perform the sacrifice of a pig again after some years.
7. This scene is no proof that the *laru kaj* is of Hindu origin. At such a feast begging Hindu *sadhus* would certainly come and ask for alms. But the tribals would offer them pork just to tease them, well aware that they are vegetarians.

# 6

# PARALLELS TO THE *LARU KAJ* AMONG OTHER PRIMITIVE TRIBES IN CENTRAL INDIA

## AMONG OTHER GOND GROUPS

As mentioned before, the *laru kaj* seems to be of Gond origin. The six million Gonds are spread over a wide area and speak either a Dravidian language or an Aryan dialect. It is probable that not all sub-divisions which today claim to be Gonds actually belong to the Gond race. Other racial groups too may have been assimilated by the Gonds, as for instance the Muria Gonds, who show more similarity with the Austro-Asiatic Gadabas than with the Gonds proper.[1] Since their language, their religion and in general their culture is not uniform, it is quite possible that outsiders got themselves incorporated into the Gond tribe when the Gonds migrated into their present habitats and doubtlessly subjugated the earlier settlers of these regions. Yet the *laru kaj*, as it is celebrated in Mandla District by the Gonds and Baigas, is at least in modified form also celebrated in districts wherever Gonds have settled. J. Lercher[2], a Catholic missionary, stated that it was performed in the Nimar District of Madhya Pradesh. But there it was not performed by the Gonds, but by the Korkus who in the past had been closely connected with the Gonds. Durga Bhagvat states that the Gonds in Drug[3] performed the *laru kaj* with almost identical rites as those in Mandla District. V. Elwin found a very similar sacrificial rite performed by the Muria Gonds[4].

D. Bhagvat gives a short description of the pig sacrifice performed by the Gonds in Drug[5] in the following words:

> "Though the Gond staying in the Baiga neighbourhood follow the same method of a pig sacrifice in the name of *Narayan Deo* (as the Baiga[6]), in Durg[7] I came across a different form adopted by the Gonds, called *Gosai Pusai*. *Gosai Pusai*, done in the name of *Narayan Deo* is a prophylactic, disease eradicating form of worship. *Gosai Pusai* is also done before the worship of *Bara Deo*[8] every three years also or by some as the Kothia in the Oundhi tract once in twelve years also. *Gosai Pusai* is done in the month of Pus[9], and usually in the dark half of the month or on the fullmoon of Baisakh[10]. Any day except Monday is chosen for it.
>
> *Gosai* means 'the lord'. The *Gosai* is *Narayan Deo*. When there is illness in the house a pig's tail is cut and it is let loose for three years. The *Samdhi* (father-in-law) of the householder then takes a prominent part in the sacrifice and four more men who assist him, one of them being the sick man (in case of a woman another man is chosen). Women clean the house with cow-dung and a few men make a pit on the threshold and also a *phulera* of the leaves of mango (*Mangifera indica*) and *bel* (*Ziziphus jujuba*), as in the case of the Baiga *laru-kaj*.
>
> A pit is dug by the men inside the house over which planks are kept. The legs of the animal are then tied to four pegs in four directions with a rope. The pig is made to eat a little rice strewn on the planks and with an iron bar its neck is crushed and also testicles and the penis. The head is then severed from the body and so are the genitals. The blood is allowed to fall into the pit. The *Samdhi* blows air into the genitals of the animal[11] and all the men sing and dance.
>
> The head is kept near the pit and the liver and heart are cooked by the officiating men and also eaten. The rest of the body is cooked and distributed to all. Some say women can eat it. Some say they cannot.

> Then another meal takes place. . .
> Men cook the pig and some rice. Having finished the meal men and women throw mud and cow-dung at each other and say abusive songs."

R.V. Russell and Hiralal[12] describe the *laru kaj* of the Gonds in a short description as follows:

> "*Narayan Deo* or the sun is also a household deity. He has a little platform inside the threshold of the house. He may be worshipped every two or three years, but if a snake appears in the house or any one falls ill they think that *Narayan Deo* is impatient and they perform his worship. A young pig is offered to him and is sometimes fattened up beforehand by feeding it on rice. The pig is laid on its back over the threshold of the door and a number of men press a heavy beam of wood on its body till it is crushed to death. They cut off the tail and testicles and bury them near the threshold. The body of the pig is washed in a hole dug in the yard, and it is then cooked and eaten. They sing to the god, 'Eat, *Narayan Deo*, eat this rice and meat, and protect us from illnesses and troubles." Next day the bones and any other remains of the pig are buried in the hole in the compound and the earth is well stamped down over it."

According to Rahmann[13] the Gonds sacrifice in other tracts to *Bara Deo* or *Bura Deo* who is identified with the sun pigs and goats.[14] The goat is let loose in the village until the day of sacrifice. The goat is bought. The killing is done by putting the goat on its back and driving a pole through its belly.

The Muria Gonds in Bastar District know of a similar sacrifice which they offer to their household gods and personal guardian spirits who are known by the name *Budha Deo*, *Kondi Deo* and *Lagar Deo*. V. Elwin[15] describes these sacrifices as follows:

> "The fact that this belief is mainly confined to the more sophisticated (though still truly Muria) villages near Kondagaon suggests that it is a Hindu importation along

> the main road from the Central Provinces.
>
> "*Kondi Deo* accompanies a girl to her husband's house on her wedding day. After the birth of the first child, any misfortune that may befall the family is attributed to the god and the family has to promise to worship him on condition that he troubles them no more. They wait for a year and then the woman's married sisters come to visit her and subscribe sufficient money to buy a pig.
>
> "On a Saturday the house is cleaned and the next morning a *chok*[16] pattern is made in the compound with rice flour, in the middle of which some rice is placed. A small earthen pot is put there and a knife. The head of the family offers incense and makes the pig eat the rice saying 'O *Kondi Deo*, protect and preserve my family and children. It is for their sake that this offering is made to you, and we will repeat it every second year.' When the pig has eaten the rice, the husband of either the eldest or the youngest sister kills it[17]. They cook the pig and invite the village elders to the feast. A pit is dug inside the house into which, when the feast is over, the leaf-plates, the pig's bones and even the water in which the cooking pots are washed, must be thrown. They then hang the earthen pot and the knife near the pot of the departed."

The worship of *Lagar Deo* is not unlike that of *Narayan Deo* to whom the *laru* pig is dedicated in Mandla District. *Lagar Deo* is also a special god of women and is indeed often identified with *Kondi Deo*. He first lives with the mother of the family, but after the marriage of the eldest daughter he transfers his residence to her new home. When her first child is born, he first troubles the mother and then goes to each of her married aunts and troubles their daughters. When they decide to appease him they invite all the female members of the family, sisters, sisters' daughters, grand-daughters, all of them, and dedicate a pig by castrating it and removing a bit of the ear and tail. They wash its legs and throw rice at it saying, "If you are a true god, give us prosperity, keep us safe and after so many years we will give you presents. Then the pig is set free and allowed to go wherever it will. The rice which was thrown at it is carefully collected and distributed among the husbands of the woman's younger sisters. They are to sow this rice every year, and at the end of three years to bring whatever has grown of the seed. The men sow this seed on a special patch of ground, harvest it and store it separately, repeating the process every year. When they are ready they appoint a certain member of the family as their representative. He visits the houses of all those relatives of the woman who three years earlier had attended the ceremony of dedication. Now again all the female members of the family must come together. Every household must bring a chicken.

On the appointed day each of the husbands comes with the rice that he had grown in the last three years from the sacred seed. They dig a pit and catch the dedicated pig. After making it eat rice as usual, they beat it over the head with a rice-husker and so kill it. The men invited to the feast may eat the pork, but the only women who may do so are those who were present at the dedication ceremony. Sometimes an interval of five years is allowed between the dedication of the pig and its sacrifice.

In some places the earthen pot with rice, pulse and a small knife is always kept near the house of the departed to satisfy *Kondi Pen*.

The description of the sacrifice is unfortunately not sufficiently exact to reveal all parallels or differences between this sacrifice and the *laru kaj*. But a few parallels with the *laru kaj* strike the eye at once, as the periodicity of the sacrifice, then the fact that the head of the family is the host, the affines carry out the killing of the victim, the addressee of the sacrifice is a household god, the purpose of the sacrifice is protection against misfortune or sickness in the family, increase of fertility in family, in the stable and on the field, the occasion for a sacrifice is misfortune or sickness in the family, there is an interval between dedication and actual sacrifice of the victim, many ceremonies of sacrifice, the treatment of the bones and remains of the meal, the pit, the festive dinner, etc., are similar.

But there is a subtle change in the nature of the god: he still is a household deity, but also a personal guardian spirit of the mistress of the house. This change may be due to strong matriarchal influences of the Hindu population in the area which the Muria Gonds now reside in. Elwin sees this whole sacrificial rite as a typical Hindu sacrifice, but its similarity with the bear sacrifice of the North-Siberian tribes makes this unlikely. The Gonds and Baigas have obviously performed the pig sacrifice long before the arrival of the Aryans in India.

It is also worth mentioning that the victim is not crushed or suffocated, but slain with a rice-pounder. Moreover, the sacrifice is no more an affair of the whole village, but performed exclusively by kinsmen. A few village elders might however be invited to grace the occasion.

Nothing is said about a generous supply of intoxicants and about indulgence in obscenities; but this might be due to the summary treatment which this rite received in the description by Elwin. He failed also to state whether the other rites performed in the *laru kaj* (hanging up the *phulera*, veneration of the skull, etc.) are carried out or not. From the context it would appear that these rites are omitted.

Another sacrifice which still more differs from the type of the *laru kaj* is performed by the Jhadi Telenga who according to Russell and Hiralal[18] are an offshoot of the Gonds through a mixture with low Telugu castes. The Jhadi Telenga sacrifice annually at the time of sowing a goat to the earth-mother whose figure they adorn with red lead and flowers. Each head of the family in the village must supply a goat. At the shrine of the goddess rice is offered to the goats. The goats which eat the rice are sacrificed, the other goats are returned to their owners because the goddess apparently scorned them as victims.

The heads of the victims belong to the officiating priest, the flesh of the victims however is taken home by the former owners and eaten in the house by the members of the family.

This sacrificial ritual reveals the influence of southern Hinduism. The sacrifice is performed in honour of the earth-goddess, in front of her image, by a special officiating priest who cuts off the victim's heads; but the flesh is still eaten by the members of the family, and each victim is offered rice which it must eat before it can be sacrificed. But the animals are no more killed by suffocation or by crushing. And the victims are no more pigs, but goats.

## AMONG OTHER DRAVIDA-SPEAKING TRIBES

Accounts of similar sacrifices among other primitive tribes of central India are unfortunately scarce as most of the tribes have not been studied thoroughly. But as far as it can be ascertained, certain elements of the *laru kaj*—remnants perhaps—are found in most of the tribes.

The Khonds, south-eastern neighbours of the Gonds and, like the Gonds, also speaking a Dravidian dialect, identify the supreme being with the sun god. Macpherson[19] relates that the name of this god is *Bura Pennu* or 'god or light'; in other regions the high-god is known as *Bella Pennu* which means 'Sun-god'. Besides *Bura Pennu* the Khonds worship—at least they did so in the time of Macpherson—the earth-mother *Tari Pennu*. Until about a hundred years ago the Khonds were religiously divided into two sects: one had a special devotion for *Bura Pennu*, the other for the earth-mother.

The sect now which had a special devotion for *Bura Pennu* as the supreme being maintained at the same time that *Bura Pennu* need not be worshipped by the same sacrifices as the other gods. Still, at the time of sowing the Khonds sacrificed a buffalo in his honour[20]. This buffalo was selected for sacrifice at its birth, dedicated to the god and let loose in the fields and grazing grounds for about five or six years. On the day of sacrifice it was chased by about fifty men until it was completely exhausted, then tied with ropes and dragged to the sacrificial post.

The other sect which had a special veneration for the earth-mother *Tari Pennu* performed in the same season human sacrifices. These will be described in a later chapter.

The similarly Dravida-speaking Oraons called in former times, according to E. T. Dalton[21], their supreme being by the name of the sun. S. C. Roy[22] clearly identifies the supreme being of the Oraons (Dharmi) with the sun. His colour was supposed to be white. According to Roy the goat or the cock sacrificed in his honour had to be of white colour. When praying or offering to Dharmi the Oraons turned towards east. Dalton[23] relates the same.

According to Roy the Oraons also worship a household god *Barnda*. Those families which do not derive their descent from the first settlers of the village sacrifice to her in time intervals of three to twelve years or at least once in a generation a bullock. But a goat or pig may be substituted for the bullock. The sacrifice is usually performed on the fullmoon day of the month of Magh (in January or February), and it is carried out with preference on an ant-hill. The village priest is present, but he only hands the sacrificial axe over to the head of the celebrating family who then cuts off the head of the animal. *Barnda* is represented at the sacrifice in one or three clods of clay. The head of the animal is placed on these clods; the eyes of the beheaded bullock are wrapped in the intestines of the animal. The blood is allowed to flow into the ant-hill. At present times this sacrifice is omitted by some families, whereupon the goddess sends them some sickness or a misfortune to remind them of their duty.

Without doubt this sacrifice of the Oraons has much similarity with the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baigas. It may be due to south-Indian influence that *Barnda* is conceived as a goddess, though P. Dehon[24] still maintains that *Barnda* is a male god. It is customary with some Telugu tribes to wrap the victim's head into its entrails after the head has been placed in front of the image of the goddess and been covered with a layer of fat from the entrails.[25]

The religion of the Maler, another Dravida-speaking tribe in the neighbourhood of the Oraons, shows many traits which we also found in the religion of the Oraons. They conform with them also in other aspects of cultural life. In former times the Maler called their supreme god *Bero*, the sun. Now *Bero Gosai* is a special sun god, existing besides the supreme god, whose name is *Ugjo Gosai*.[26] He prefers victims of white colour. When praying or sacrificing to the supreme god the Maler turn towards the east.

Their god of vegetation is called *Kul Gosain*, a female deity. When the sowing season approaches the head of the family sacrifices to the goddess a pig or goat, often merely a few fowls. The village priest assists him in the sacrifice.[27]

## AMONG THE HINDI-SPEAKING TRIBES

Of the Hindi-speaking tribes of eastern central India the Bhaina, probably a sub-section of the Baigas, worship as their supreme deity a goddess whom they call *Nakti Devi*, the "Noseless Goddess". For her ritual rice is placed on a square of the floor washed with cowdung, and *ghi* or preserved butter is poured on it and burnt. A hen is made to eat the rice, and then its head is cut off and laid on the square. The liver of the victim is burnt on the fire as an offering to the deity and the head and body of the animal are then eaten.[28]

In the neighbourhood of the Bhainas, in Bilaspur District, lives a hunting tribe called Dhanwar. They perform an interesting sacrifice to the goddess *Maiya Andhiari*. She is the goddess of the dark fortnight of the month. She is worshipped in the house conjointly by husband and wife on any Tuesday in the dark fortnight of Magh (January-February), all the relatives of the family being invited. On the day of worship the husband and wife observe a fast, all the water which is required for use in the house during the day and night must be brought into it in the early morning. A circular pit is dug inside the house, about three feet deep and as wide. A she-goat which as yet has not borne a kid is sacrificed to the goddess in the house. It must be first consecrated to the goddess by eating some rice; its body is then washed in water and some of the sacred *dubh* grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) is placed on it, and then the head is cut off from the body with an axe. The goat is skinned and cut into parts. All that is inedible, the skin and the bones are thrown into the pit. The flesh is cooked and on the evening eaten with rice and pulse, all the family and relatives, men and women, eating together at the same time. After the meal, all the remaining food and the water that had been used for cooking, and the new earthen pots used to carry water on that day are thrown into the pit. The mouth of the pit is then covered with wooden boards and plastered over with mud with great care to prevent a child falling into it; as it is held that nothing that has once gone into the pit may be taken out, even if it were a human being. It is said that once in the old days a man who happened to fall into the pit was buried alive, its mouth being covered with planks of wood; and he was found alive when the pit was reopened the following year.[29]

The Bhois or Dhimars (fishermen) perform the sacrifice of a black she-goat to the goddess *Devi* in the same manner. The Bhois live in the same area and speak an Aryan dialect[30].

The Bhuiyas, according to Russell[31] and Roy[32] related to the Baigas and like them speaking an Aryan dialect, worship the sun by the name of *Boram*. They also call the sun god *Dharm Deota*, like the Oraons. *Boram* is the first and highest of the gods. He is also the maker of the world. At the time of the first sowing he is worshipped by the sacrifice of a white cock. This sacrifice is—as all the other sacrifices—performed in the sacred grove (*sara*) under trees; the sacrificial meal is attended by men only. The officiating priest who belongs to the same tribe receives as his portion the head of the victim.[33] Dalton unfortunately does not describe any details of the sacrifice.

On the other hand, Russell and Hiralal maintain that the Bhuiyas indeed worship the sun as *Dharm Deota*, but do not perform any sacrifices in his honour. Probably here as elsewhere the customs differ locally. We cannot expect among these tribes a well defined and uniform theological system; customs and beliefs vary almost from village to village.[34]

The Kisans or Nagesar, who live still more in the east and according to Dalton are descended from the Nagas, but in any case today speak an Aryan dialect, sacrifice to the sun a white cock whenever they think that such a sacrifice is due.[35]

Summarising these details we may state that the northern neighbours of the Gonds and Baigas, especially the Hindi-speaking tribes, worship a high-god who bears an Aryan name and who is more or less identified with the sun. Similar tribes but living more in southern areas worship a female deity as their supreme deity. The ritual of sacrifice which the northern tribes perform are addressed to the high-god or sun-god and are simple. White victims are preferred. On the other hand, the rituals of sacrifice of the Bhainas, Dhanwars and Bhois are more similar to the *laru kaj* and may have been adopted from the Gonds or Baigas living in the neighbourhood. It is also possible that these sacrificial rites are remnants of the Aryan Yagnam or horse sacrifice.

## AMONG THE MUNDARI-SPEAKING TRIBES

The Juangs, who according to Dalton[36] speak a Munda dialect, but are very primitive hunters and foodgatherers and therefore may belong to an older racial group, sacrifice fowls to the sun and to the earth; to the sun when in trouble, to the earth to be blessed with an abundant harvest. Their priest is called Nagam. Unfortunately Dalton relates nothing much about their sacrificial rites.

According to Dalton, the Korwas worship the sun by the Hindu name *Bhagwan*. But it is not certain that a sun-god is known among all their sub-groups.[37]

The *Encyclopaedia Mundarica*[38] states that the Kharias, who too speak a Munda dialect, see in the sun a personification of their supreme god, but do identify him with the sun. The Kharias sacrifice a white cock to the sun-god in June or July at dawn, if they have been warned to do so by some misfortunes. At the same time they also promise to sacrifice a white he-goat after three years.[39]

Dalton, on the other hand, states that the Kharias worship the sun under the name of *Bero*. But when they pray to *Bero* they address him as *parmeshwar*, as the Hindus do, not as *Sing Bonga*, as the Hos do.[40]

Every head of a family should sacrifice five times in his life to this deity: the first time fowls, the second time a pig, then a white goat, after that a ram and finally a buffalo. The god is called ungrateful if he does not reward a man generously who has performed all these sacrifices. They are always performed in front of an ant-hill. The head of the family is the officiating priest.

The Mundas and Hos call their supreme god *Sing Bonga*. He is the creator of the world and the sun god. His abode is in heaven (*sirma*, which signifies heaven, but also the sky)[41].

Dalton states that in former days the Mundas, as well as the Hos and Kharias, performed sacrifices to the sun.[42] Later these sacrifices were gradually abandoned. Among them too it was the head of the family who performed the sacrifice.[43]

The Santals, according to Dalton[44] probably related to the Kharwar, differ from the other Munda tribes physically through more negroid features. They sacrifice every third year, in some families every fourth or fifth year, a goat in honour of the sun god *Sing Bonga*. The head of the family performs the sacrifice; its purpose is the wellbeing of the family and especially of the children, "that they may not die through illness nor fall into sin." The sacrifice is performed at dawn in the open, on a spot which has been specially prepared and cleaned for this purpose.

Dalton mentions in his description of this sacrifice, which unfortunately is much too summary, that the motive of this sacrifice differs always, with the deity to whom it is addressed. They sacrifice to *Sing Bonga* that he may continue to be kind to them and to protect them; they sacrifice to the lower deities when illness or misfortune befalls them in order to propitiate them.

A. Campbell[45] states that the Santals worship also a high god and maker of the world whom they call *Thakur Jiu*. This god is not identified with the sun. But as *Thakur Jiu* is an Aryan name—a literal translation of the name would be: noble spirit, or ruling spirit—the concept of this god might be derived from either Aryan immigrants or from the Aryan-speaking hill tribes.

The iron smelters of the Mundas, called Asurs, possess a myth which relates that *Sing Bonga*, the sun god, came into the world as a boy suffering of itch. He taught the Asurs, in order to be successful iron smelters, to sacrifice to *Sing Bonga* first a white fowl, then a white goat, further a white sheep and finally, when all the furnaces fail, to sacrifice a human being. He declared himself ready to be their first victim. He was sacrificed, but on the third day he emerged from the furnace alive, "beaming like the morning sun, covered with gold and silver."[46]

According to T. Das[47] the Bhumij sacrifice to the sun god white he-goats and cocks. But no further details are known about these sacrifices.

Neither Russell nor Dalton mention that the Savaras worship the sun as a deity. But Thurston places the sun as their deity on the fourth place when he describes their gods.[48] He states that in some villages the sun is the only known deity. This conception of the sun as their main deity may have been borrowed by the Savaras from the Munda tribes, as also the myth in which the stars appear as the children of the sun and the moon.

With regard to the Gadabas, Russell and Hiralal[49] merely state that they sacrifice a white cock to the sun and a red one to the moon.

The Korkus, the westernmost Munda tribe, possess a sacred shrine of the sun god *Surya Deo* near Karakhund in Makrai State. On a hill there is a large boulder in which are carved the figure of a man on horseback and the figures of the sun and the moon. At its side is a smaller boulder with the figure of a man only. Near the boulders is a cave inhabited, as the Korkus claim, by a python. But no one has ever seen the snake. In former times a priest is said to have lived near the shrine, but he died long ago.

The Korkus go every third year on pilgrimage to this shrine. The Gonds living in the neighbourhood also sacrifice there, and so do the Hindus. The village priest of the Korkus (*bhumka*) performs the sacrifice.[50] It consists of two he-goats, a black and a red one, and a white cock. The he-goats to be sacrificed are dedicated to *Surya Deo* three years before the sacrifice takes place.

The vow of performing such a sacrifice is taken in a case of severe illness or in misfortune, or in urgent need of a good harvest. The village headman of Deoli, a village about 20 kms. from Karakhund, for instance, had once taken the vow to perform a sacrifice to *Surya Deo* at his shrine every third year. Another Korku of the same village took a similar vow, but with the prayer the god should supply him with a pair of bullocks, a cart and a big house. It seems that the prayer was heard because when some time afterwards I visited the village the village headman as well as the other Korku were going to Karakhund with 15 other carts full of Korkus to fulfil their vow. In the years when no sacrifice is performed the Korkus sacrifice in the barn a white and a black he-goat, but no cock.

If a Korku who has taken the vow to sacrifice to *Surya Deo* forgets to carry out his promise the god reminds him by making him or another member of his family sick and by putting worms in his wounds.[51]

## AMONG THE TRIBES OF NORTH-EAST INDIA

The Lakhers seems to have many customs in common with the Baigas of Central India. This similarity would require a further study. The Lakhers belong most probably to the Kuki tribes.

The Lakhers have certain places which they call Khisong. They are inhabited by some powerful spirit or genius loci. These spirits generally dwell on mountain tops or precipices, or in deep pools in rivers or lakes. . .

The sacrifice—called Khisongbo—is performed by all the villagers jointly, and its object is to improve the land, the crops, and the animals, and also to ensure the good health of the villagers. A man is selected by the villagers to perform the sacrifice who must be clean and healthy. . . A red cock and a pig are the usual sacrifice, but once in a generation a *mithun* is sacrificed instead of a pig. The sacrifice is performed outside the village at some spot . . . A flat stone is laid at the foot of a well-grown young tree, and a head stone is also erected. Before the sacrifice is performed, the sacrificer intones a chant, calling on the *Khisong* by name to make them prosperous. The pig is held down by young men who are ceremoniously pure, and is killed with an arrow at the foot of the tree, and its *phavaw*, both raw and cooked, consisting of its ears, tongue, tail, penis, toe, and blood and some cooked liver and intestine with rice and salt, are placed on the stone. The sacrificer eats a little of the *phavaw*, the meat of the pig's skull and the whole of the chicken. The rest of the meat is eaten by the villagers. When a *mithun* is sacrificed to the *Khisong*, a rope is tied to its horns, and it is held by a number of young man who must be ceremoniously pure. The sacrificer then shoots an arrow into the *mithun*, after which the men who are holding the rope pull the *mithun* down on its knees and kill it by striking it on the head with an axe."[52]

A similar village sacrifice is the *Tleulia* which is celebrated generally every second year. It is addressed to the village ground—the slope of the hill on which the village is situated.

The Purums, another tribe of the same region, have a similar house god as the Baigas. "*Senamahi* appears to be one of the most important deities of the Purums. He is spoken of as the house god and the sib god. As house god he has a particular place set apart for him within the living house of every Purum family. The place set apart for *Senamahi* is fixed near the right wall (as one enters the house). Fowls are sacrificed to the deity by strangulation. Generally the householder catches hold of a hen or cock and strangles it while the *maipa* (magician or soothsayer) recites the requisite prayer over the bird. Next the meat of the bird is dressed and cooked and again placed with boiled rice on a plate before the seat of the god, and the *maipa* again utters a prayer. . . Next this boiled rice and meat are partaken of by those present."[53] The head of the family worships the house god whenever he feels that worship is due for the health and prosperity of the family. The rite is performed before the altar of *Senamahi* within the house at one of its corners.

The Garos have a similar sacrifice, but it appears that the pig sacrifice is no more so important as the dance with a hobby-horse, which we had met with in the *laru kaj* of the Baigas. The hobby-horse has its trunk made of a plantain stem with head and legs of bamboo. The expenses of the festival are borne by the village headman. They are considerable. For the village headman (*nokma*) has not only to provide for the provisions of the dinner, but also for plenty of liquor. The whole feast lasts three days and two nights. The dance with the hobby-horse goes on throughout the night. It is performed by a man. After the feast is over, the hobby-horse is thrown into a pond or river.[54]

## AMONG SOUTH-INDIAN TRIBES AND CASTES

We find sacrifices similar to that of the central Indian tribes further south in the heart of Dravidian India.

The Golar, for instance, a shepherd caste of Andhra Pradesh, sacrifice goats to their sheep-god every fifth or tenth year. This god whose clay image is erected outside the village is supposed to protect their herds against epidemics and wild animals. The head of each family sacrifices at the first sacrifice two goats, at the second five and in the successive sacrifices seven, nine and twelve goats. When the head of the family dies, his son again begins with the sacrifice of two goats. At the second sacrifice he kills five goats, at the third seven, and so forth. The sacrificial flesh is cooked and eaten by the caste fellows of the village.[55]

In the Nilgiri mountains of South India resides a mysterious tribe, the Todas. They are distinguished from the rest of the neighbouring tribes not only racially, but also culturally and by their religion. So far it has been impossible to fit them into any ethnic group of South India. The Todas are most probably the remnants of a once bigger tribe, as so many tribes in southern and central India, which have developed their original customs and abilities quite originally and independently into their own present form. The Todas are at present almost exclusively buffalo herders and their whole religion and economic life is centred around the buffalo.

As the Todas[56] milk their buffaloes from the left, it is likely that their former home was originally West Asia, or they learned milking from tribes who once were at home in Western Asia; for it is well-known that all tribes breeding milk animals and milking from the left came from the Middle East, while the shepherd races of Inner Asia and of Eurasia milk from the right or from behind.[57]

The Todas now perform certain sacrifices which are vaguely remindful of the pig sacrifice of the Gonds and Baigas. One instance is the so-called Erkumtthpimi sacrifice of the Todas. At this sacrifice a young male buffalo is killed and eaten. The sacrifice takes place either in the village or at the dairy *Ti*.[58] At the dairy *Ti* the sacrifice is certainly performed every year three times, while the opinions are divided how often it must be performed in the village. Some say that it must be performed once a year in the village, and in every village. But according to other informers the sacrifice takes place as often as a suitable victim is available.

The place of sacrifice is in a bush where the ceremonies can be performed without interference through unwelcome intruders.

The sacrificial feast takes place on certain dates, but these dates differ with each dairy or clan to which the dairy belongs.

First fuel is collected for the sacrificial fire and piled up in a rectangular square. Then some of the men make fire by rubbing two sticks together, while others sharpen some sticks on which the pieces of sacrificial flesh are to be impaled. Exactly fifty such sticks are required.

As soon as the sacrificial fire has been lighted the buffalo calf selected for the sacrifice is brought. The animal should be fifteen days of age and without blemish, *i.e.*, its ears should not be split, its tail not cut and its eyes must be clear.

Meanwhile the officiating priest goes and cuts a thick log of wood and three branches with leaves from the tree *Meliosma pungens*. The three branches should have perfectly undamaged leaves. The log of wood is carved into a club with which the victim will be killed. It is about a yard long and three inches thick.

Now the officiating priest with his club and the three branches in his right hand goes in front of the calf. He lifts club and branches to his forehead in greeting and recites a certain prayer. This prayer is different in every clan. In it the calf is requested to appear before a certain deity and from there to proceed to a certain hill.

After some other ceremonies the officiating priest kills the animal beating it with his club over the head. If the calf falls, the priest sweeps with the three branches and the leaves three times the ground around the animal. Should the animal only have fainted after the blow with the club and again revive, it is again and vigorously beaten with the club on its testicles until it dies.

As soon as the victim is dead, the priest makes a cut with his knife around the neck of the animal, another one around its belly and then one around the legs somewhat above the hoofs. He then skins the animal but leaves skull and parts of the legs above the hoofs still covered with skin. Then the animal is cut up, according to a fixed ritual. The blood is poured on the skin and the pieces of flesh cut from the carcase are smeared with it, as also the entrails, liver and other organs. Then the various pieces are impaled on the sticks and these are stuck in the ground near the skin which is spread on the ground. The Todas also cut special pieces from the ribs and the diaphragm, on which probably still hang some parts of the net of the intestines, and stick them on sticks.

Ultimately all other parts of the carcase are laid around the fire. Meanwhile the assistants of the officiating priest continue to cut up the victim's carcase. Also the intestines are cut into small pieces and impaled on the sticks. The spleen is given to a cat, and the stomach is removed and filled with milk. Finally the head of the victim is impaled on a stick which is then stuck into the ground at the side of the fire. The four hoofs with the leg stumps on which the skin is still intact are placed around it. At last the head of the victim is taken from its stick and for about a minute held over the fire to singe off the ears which finally are torn out by the priest. Then the head is again stuck on its stick. Now the priest takes three pieces of burning wood coal from the fire and throws them over the fire and the head while reciting a prayer.

As soon as the pieces of flesh on the sticks near the fire are sufficiently roasted the priest eats those pieces which he had cut from the ribs and the diaphragm. The other pieces he distributes among the men attending the sacrifice. The hoofs with the leg stumps, the hip bones and thigh bones and the head of the victim are then carried into the dairy. They should on no account be eaten by the women. The other pieces of flesh can be eaten by any one, also by women. Often butter is offered with the meat before the meal.

Rivers was not able to discover the real significance of this sacrifice. The prayer recited before the sacrifice, however, makes it evident that the Todas want to increase the general well-being of the buffaloes by this sacrifice. The actual prayers mention expressly only the individual villages inhabited by the celebrating clan, but Rivers had no doubt that at the sacrifice they had the buffaloes especially in mind and that the purpose of the prayer was: "May the buffaloes increase and prosper." The Todas sacrifice one buffalo calf to ensure the well-being of the other buffaloes in their possession.

It is not clear to whom this sacrifice is really addressed. But it seems to be connected with *Kwoto* who is a kind of culture hero of the Todas. It is he who was able to fetter the sun with a stone chain, the sun sitting on a buffalo. *Kwoto* is supposed to have performed this sacrifice for the first time and to have fed the other gods with the flesh of the victim.[59]

It could be argued that the Todas were originally hunters and foodgatherers; this would explain the use of sacred arrows at their sacrifices. Through intimate contact with the Badagas, who are agriculturists, they must have learned to keep buffaloes. They adopted buffalo herding (with its many accompanying religious rites) as their exclusive economy and source of livelihood. However, they did not adopt also agriculture from the Badagas, because this would have been incompatible with their nomadic mode of life. It is possible that the Todas also adopted the Erkumtthpimi sacrifice from the

Badagas who, themselves, abandoned and forgot this rite when they were converted to Hinduism.[60] In present time the Badagas do not kill the buffaloes which they offer on their own feasts but donate them to the temple.[61]

## SUMMARY

A preliminary summary on these sacrificial rites among the Indian primitive tribes reveals the following general features:

The sacrificial rite which we meet in the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baigas is found almost exclusively among the Dravida-speaking tribes of central India, and among those Mundari and Hindi speaking tribes which stand in close and lasting contact with the Gonds or Baigas.

It also appears that the sacrificial rite of the *laru kaj* is found only among those tribes which according to their own traditions once lived in the south of India and which even today inhabit more the southern regions of central India. Of all these tribes, the Oraons seem to have reached on their migration furthest north-east, while the Gonds settled more in the south and west. It is now impossible to ascertain whether the *laru kaj* ritual is an original sacrifice of these tribes or whether they learnt to perform it from some other people while residing in the south.

As far as South-Indian tribes are concerned no tribe except the Todas performs at present a ritual which resembles the *laru kaj* of the Gonds. Even in the buffalo sacrifice of the Todas the *phulera* complex is completely absent, though the element of a sending off the victim to a god or culture hero and the manner of killing the victim with a club are also found in the *laru kaj*.

The Hindi and Mundari speaking tribes address their sacrifice to the supreme god who is at the same time a sun god. The purpose of the sacrifice is the same: fertility and protection against disease and misfortune. But the way of killing is often different and the rites connected with the *phulera* are completely omitted.

## NOTES

1. C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1948, 3.
2. Private communication of Rev. J. Lercher.
3. D. Bhagvat, 1944, 95.

4. V. Elwin, 1947, 185 f.
5. D. Bhagvat, 1944, 95 f.
6. The authoress is obviously of the opinion that the Gonds adopted this sacrifice from the Baigas. I have already stated my reasons why this is improbable.
7. A tract Raipur, south of the habitat of the Baigas.
8. Highgod of the Gonds.
9. Pus is in December or January.
10. Baisakh is in April or May.
11. Hivale relates (1946, 139) that the Pardhans blow air into the bladder of the Laru and beat the girls with it. Among the Ostyaks the bladder is the "soul's bag" from which man can be revived. *Cf.* A. Friedrich, 1943, 206.
12. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 101 f.
13. R. Rahmann, 1936, 49.
14. Elwin too mentions that in some areas the Gonds substitute a goat for the pig. This is done in regard for the prejudice of the Hindus who have a horror for a pig sacrifice and the eating of pork.
15. V. Elwin, 1947, 185 f.
16. *Chok* or *chauk* is a sacred symbol drawn on the floor with rice powder in the form of a wheel or *swastika*.
17. Among the Baigas it is likewise the *Samdhi*, the father of a daughter or son-in-law who directs the sacrifice.
18. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 240.
19. S. C. Macpherson, 1843, 223 and 239.
20. S. C. Roy, 1928, 19 f.
21. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 256.
22. S.C. Roy, 1928, 72 f.
23. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 256.
24. P. Dehon, 1909, 132.
25. H. Whitehead, 1921, 51.
26. S.C. Roy, 1928, 20; W. Sherwell, 1851, 556.
27. S.C. Roy, 1928, 39.
28. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, II, 231.
29. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, II, 496.
30. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, II, 507.
31. *Ibid.*, II, 310 f.
32. S.C. Roy, 1935, 208.
33. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 141 f.
34. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, II, 317.
35. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 131 f.
36. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 141.
37. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 159.
38. Hofmann-van Emelen, 1930, 2334.
39. T. Das, 1931, 37.
40. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 159.
41. M.B. Bhaduri, 1944, 152.

42. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 186; S.C. Roy, 1912, 467.
43. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 159.
44. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 213.
45. A. Campbell, 1916, 15 f.
46. Hoffmann-van Emelen, 1930, 240-50, 1648-58.
47. T. Das, 1931, 43.
48. E. Thurston, 1909, 333.
49. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 11.
50. Unfortunately no description of the ritual of this sacrifice has been available. J. Lercher, a Catholic missionary, once observed the sacrifice of a pig over the doorsill in a Korku house.
51. My informant for these details was Motilal, a Korku of Ranhai in the Nimar District of Madhya Pradesh.
52. N.E. Parry, 1932, 367.
53. T. Das, 1945, 195.
54. A. Playfair, 1909, 94; J.G. Frazer, 1900, II, 337 and VIII, 43 n.
55. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 37.
56. W.H. R. Rivers, 1906, 54, figure 17.
57. Private communication by Prof. W. Amschler.
58. The Todas have various types of dairies, in which they look after their animals and where they extract the milk from them.
59. W.H.R. Rivers, 1906, 210.
60. The Badagas today are partly followers of the Lingayat sect and partly Saivites.
61. E. Thurston, 1909, I, 97.

# 7

# PARALLELS TO THE *AŚVAMEDHA* IN THE SACRIFICES OF THE AGRARIAN PEOPLES

THIS second sacrificial complex mentioned at the conclusion of the previous chapter shall now be described in concrete examples, just as they are found among various peoples and tribes. This sacrificial ritual is in essential points similar to that of the first sacrificial complex, as found among the nomadic animal breeders and the primitive hunters, but it shows certain modifications which result from their different concept of God, their different localisation of the principle of life—no more the breath, but the heart or liver is now the seat of life—and from a stronger emphasis on magic.

While in the first sacrifice complex the sacrificial is mainly addressed to the supreme god or his hypostasis as universe, sky or sun, the second sacrificial complex is centred in lunar mythology. This is found in innumerable variations on the whole North-Eurasia, and there is scarcely a single element which does not appear in more or less striking conformity among the eastern Palaeo-Siberians and North-American Red Indians or among the Caucasians and Austronesians.

Two main problems are here discussed: the origin of the earth and the origin of mankind. The first theme contains a typical lunar-mythological motive: the growth of the earth. The second theme deals mainly with the origin of man from the tree of mankind, which grows from the grave or even from the body of the First Man who was created by the supreme god but later somehow lost his life. If we now substitute in place of the supreme god, resp. in place of the First Man—a lunar-mythological conception—the lunar-telluric mother we get the matriarchal conception of lunar mythology, as it is found in Melanesia and in the Caucasus, in North Eurasia and in North-America. The dualistic high gods too with their descendants represent just this one and the same First Man who descends from the lunar-telluric primal mother and receives from her and carries in himself the germs of life and death. He dies, but lives on in his descendants who in their turn also must die. Thus two forces live in him which he has inherited from the primal mother: a life-giving and a death-giving force and that are just the two hostile brothers, the high gods.[1]

This First Man, created by the supreme god, is the ancestor who at the same time poses as the saviour[2]. On account of his mortality he is connected with the waning moon. With that we get the first astral-mythological investiture of the saviour. A further step is taken when he is identified with a certain kind of animal which refers to his mortality and which thus also receives a lunar-mythological significance. Such animals are in particular those which dig and live in the earth in which corpses are buried; thus in worldwide distribution and continuance the hare, the rabbit, the hedgehog, the porcupine and the coyote.

In later cultures the saviour often appears in very articulate opposition to the supreme god. This goes so far that in some cases the saviour usurps the position of the supreme god. While originally the conception is wide-spread that death is caused by the supreme god himself, later the idea becomes prevalent that the moon has the power to give new life after death. In this moment other lunar-mythological animals assume importance, as the snake and the lizard, because they cast off their skin and renew it; the jaguar, because it is spotted; and so on. It also happens that the lunar-mythological saviour gets into opposition to the sun and is regarded and discredited as the dark one, the death-giver, the physically and ethnically evil spirit, in opposition to the sun who never dies and has eternal life.

Among the Inner-Asiatic nomadic animal breeders, however, the primal man has still remained the saviour of the tribe or at least of whole clans. And while at the sacrifice addressed to the high god the shaman plays an insignificant part, he is the main actor in the sacrifice to the First Man. The magic power of blood too plays an important part in this sacrifice. The rites of such sacrifices shall now be described in the following pages.

## AMONG THE INNER-ASIATIC NOMADIC ANIMAL BREEDERS

As mentioned before, the Nomadic animal breeders of Inner Asia have lived a long time in symbiosis with agrarian peoples and even with city people in central and southern Asia. Naturally they have also adopted many social and religious traits from the agriculturists. Thus they seem to have adopted a sacrificial ritual which originally resembles in many details the horse and bear sacrifice of the animal breeders and hunters, but with certain important modifications and chances.

A. Gahs describes this sacrificial ritual, as it was found among the Abakan-Tatars, the Katchinzes. He follows the description of the ritual as recorded by Radlov-Katanov[3]:

This is the cult of the so-called white hare chest, a guardian spirit of certain clans. The "hare" is fed every year in spring and autumn, while every third year a whole clan performs a solemn adoration of the hare. Its idol is erected on a tree in a grove. A white lamb with yellow face is killed in the following manner: the belly of the living lamb is cut open and the heart with the lungs is torn out. A special shaman now takes over; he is called "the fanning one". He takes certain parts of the right side of the lamb's body (the increasing dark moon also grows at the right side), hangs these at certain spots on the tree, after a while he smears with their blood the idol and at last he throws them into the fire. After all pieces are burnt he turns the idol from its southern side to its eastern side (where just at that time the moon disappears). At last, after a meal the shaman fans with a white and a red cloth the women who sit at the back of the sacrificial place.[4]

Apart from the last scene, which is of some significance, but not found in other rituals, the same ritual of sacrifice is performed by a number of tribes. A few characteristic variants may be mentioned here shortly: "The Mongolian Buriat in the vicinity of Lake Baikal, Siberia, are the latest surviving sacrificers of the domesticated animals. Their horse sacrifice (*Tailgan*) was held on 2 August on a sacred hill inhabited by their gods, the *Burkans*, "the masters". The horse was bound, thrown upon its back and held tightly with ropes, while the officiating person cut open its breast and pulled out the pulsating heart . . . The animal's bones were burnt on the altar, and the flesh was cooked and devoured by the worshippers. Portions of the flesh, and some of the broth prepared, were given to the flames, which also received libation of liquor called *tarasun*, distilled from sour milk. *Tarasun* was the *soma* of the Buriats, and their fire spirit was, like the Indian *agni*, a ready drinker of it. Bits of food were also flung to aerial spirits, while oblations were poured on the hill. The belief prevailing that these offerings multiplied sufficiently to permit of the gods feeding sumptuously. As each of the worshippers of the spirits of nature accepted a portion of sacrificial food, a prayer was chanted, entreating the gods to cause increase of all things.

> "Let our villages be one verst longer", they said, "create cattle in our enclosures; under our blankets create a son; send down rain from high heaven to us; cause much grass to grow; create so much grain that the sickle cannot raise it, and so much grass that the scythe cannot cut it."

After the sacrifice, the food was divided and the fragments that remained were carefully burnt, "for none of it must be eaten by dogs; that would be desecration, and misfortune would follow in its wake.[5]" Among the Abakan-Tatar Sagaian, *i.e.*, Turcisised tribes of the Jenissei, the mountain spirit, the "awe-inspiring primary father, who dwells above" is prayed by two shamans with the accompaniment of drums, after the usual above described sacrifice of lambs, to grant the "fruit of the sown grain". The Mongols sacrificed in the same manner bulls, rams and he-goats near the so-called *Obo* (heaps of boulders), while the Turcisised Urjanhajians state expressly that the *Obo* sacrifice is performed to the bear, the "primary father of all men and the lord of the earth and of the water" (Radlov-Katanov). For the same bear the Turcisised Yakut hold in autumn a sacrifice which is directed by nine male and nine female shamans (Jochelson). How such a true shamanistic sacrifice is performed by the Yakut the following description will show:

> A cow is brought to the shaman who grips her in rage (ecstasy) at the horns, throws her to the ground and riding on her sings and drums; then he cuts the feet of the living cow, cuts open her chest, tears out the heart and still twitching lifts it up high with the hand; then he bites into the heart, as if he would eat it, and smears the blood all over his face, his hands and dress.[6] This resembles closely the south-Asiatic and Mexican human sacrifices. In fact, these above described animal sacrifices are later substitutes of human sacrifices. This can be proved from the habit of the Finnish Wotyak who in former times performed every third year human sacrifices. During the last great famine a religious murder took place in one village about which the trial was not then concluded in 1894 and which was done in a very skilled manner through the removal of heart and liver.[7]

H. Consten[8] relates that occasionally also in Inner-Asia such human sacrifices are performed: On August 6, 1912 a human sacrifice was performed after the capture of the fort Kobdo in northern Mongolia. Its ritual was similar to the above described animal sacrifice. The sacrifice took place in a valley about two-and-a-half versts from the fort. . . ". . . Bloody-red the sun glanced on a long forgotten picture from the time of Djingis Chan and of the Tantra cult. . . Long-drawn, horribly alluring . . . the bone trumpets call through the rocks. . . Mysteriously sounds the human skin of the drums. Everything gets silent. Some faces pale. Quickly the victims (captured Sarts and Chinese) are undressed to the skin. Lower Lamas and Chailar-Mongols tie their hands and feet at their backs, the head is drawn backwards and the pigtail tied to the hands and feet at the back so that the torso is curved upwards in a high vault. Louder murmur the Lamas their formulas of exorcism and their prayers. Quicker gets the rhythm of their ancient songs, the pipes sound more furiously and shriller; grumbling throw the tops and jags of the rocks back the echo.

"Now Jal-lama steps in front. He is, as all the other Lamas, without head-dress, without a cap, only in a red mantle. He murmurs prayers; his face gloats over the shaking fear of his victims. Before the first poor, painfully fettered Chinese he kneels down; in his left hand he holds a short, round, sacrificial knife, similar to an axe. Glancing at this knife the human victim expells a horrible yell which is suddenly silenced by the hissing sound of the Chinese cymbal which is beaten. It is done. With lightning quickness Jal-lama pushed the knife with his left hand into the chest of the victim, with his right hand he tore the unwounded twitching heart from the chest cavity to write with the out-pouring blood on the flags of the Chailar Mongols the sacred formulas of exorcism. These are to secure the Mongols the assistance of the Boddhisatwas who now have turned into demons and to make their victory certain. Then he places the out-squeezed bloody heart into a Gabala offered to him. This is likewise nothing else but the upper half of a human skull, covered with silver and gold. A yell after the other, accompanied by a hissing beat on the cymbal, cuts through the evening, till at last all five flags are consecrated and written on with human heart-blood. With a short thrust of the axe-formed knife the other Lamas cut open with great skill the skull of the dead and place the still warm brain into the Gabala to the dead human hearts. Then they carry them with mysterious songs and ceremonies, with the alluring call of the awe-inspiring trumpets and drums, to a mighty pyre out of which mystically flames break. Horrified and shocked the Mongols at first draw back, but then they run with a joyful shouting to the sacred fire and light their own small camp fire from the flames. . ."

In the monastery Kumbum dance mysteries take place which have to their object human sacrifices. It is played still more realistically in the southern conception[9]: "The figure of a young lad is formed of dough, as true to life as possible. They stick into these figures images of the heart, lungs, stomach, intestines, etc. The heart and the blood-vessels are filled with a red fluid resembling blood. Wadell states to have heard that in Lhasa even real flesh from the bodies of executed criminals is stuck into the figure. The Linka is brought on the scene by skeleton dancers, is later pierced at various points with horns by *Yama*, the god of death, and its limbs are tied with ropes. Then the bloody intestines are torn out. The attendants throw with hands and horns the pieces into all four directions of the compass. The ropes are then collected in a bowl and in solemn procession brought before *Yama* who eats a piece and throws the rest away. The crowd present struggles hard to get a bit of the blood-smeared pieces because they are supposed to cure illness and other evils."

## AMONG THE TRIBES OF SOUTH-EAST ASIA

A sacrifice that to some extent resembles this agrarian form of sacrifice is performed in Celebes at the beginning of the rainy season. A. Grubauer describes it in the following words: "They celebrated the Mabogau or rain festival at which they prayed to the gods for water from above to be able to begin with the planting of paddy. On an open place in front of the *Dusunga* (house of the spirits) two sacrificial buffaloes were tethered to stout posts. Here in Leboni white buffaloes are always selected on such occasions with a religious background. In this case also both animals, one a full-grown and the other a half-grown buffalo, were of spotlessly white colour. . ."

In full dress, with long white pants, and a fluttering band around his forehead, the chief, leading his little son of four years on his left hand, approached with naked sword the bigger buffalo. A swishing blow, and the straight blade penetrated deep into the back of the animal anxiously bellowing. The blow left a gaping wound which on the white skin looked horrible. Singly the other men now one after the other approached and each one gave one or several blows with his sword to the tortured animal. The blood gushed out in streams. At last the poor buffalo fell to the ground half faint in his pain and fright. Under the excited approving shouts of the on-lookers the animal weltering in its blood and with hollow groans was showered with innumerable blows, heedlessly where it was hit . . . the grown-up people, men and women, formed a circle, and in raptures, with flashing eyes they danced singing around the mutilated victim. It was a horrible sight. The men formed one half of the chain, the women the other. The texts which were more spoken than sung consisted of invocations of the spirits and formed the religious parts of the Mabogau.

When late in the afternoon I went again into the village, I found that the two cut off heads of the buffaloes were stuck on a lone standing structure near the *Dusunga* where it remains until the conclusion of the feast. And this lasts with all nightly Marengo dances in the house of the spirits as long till the desired rain at last sets in. Only then the heads of the buffaloes are brought in to serve without regard to their degree of decomposition as a tasty meal. The horns however are hung up in the *Dusunga* as sacrificial gifts."[10]

The Batak of Sumatra even performed a human sacrifice in the past by peculiar rites. As among the Ainu, the Batak too cherished a magic stick on which the figures of their ancestors were carved. But its inside was filled with magic power. This magic power could be gained by the voluntary sacrifice of a boy. "The warriors of the village kidnap a boy from a hostile village and keep him imprisoned in the village communal house. They feed him for weeks and even months with the best of foods, including gold-coloured rice, spiced meat, sour fish, and especially the liver of all kinds of house animals, apes, and other game animals. A buffalo horn with a hole in its end is used to give the child palm wine. In this manner the child is made willing and ready for everything that will be demanded from it. Three or four years is considered the best age for a child to be used in the preparation of the sacrifice, for such a child is old enough to answer the questions put to it, but young enough to be unsuspecting.

When the mind of the child has been sufficiently prepared, the shaman says one day to him: "I am going to send you to destroy my enemy. Wherever I send you there you must go. You must never, however, reveal either your or my name to anyone, nor the manner of your death". If the child refuses to obey, he continues to be well taken care of until such time as he is ready to accede to anything asked of him. The child is led blindfolded out of the village on a day reckoned favourable by the shaman. After placing him in a ditch with earth around him so that only the head remains above ground, the shaman asks once more, "Will you allow yourself to be sent by me?" If the child answers, "Yes", the shaman puts some food into its mouth and speaks to him kindly, saying, "Here, take this special meat, take this sour rice, take this ginger, take this roasted rice kernel, take this palm wine and be obedient". Unsuspectingly the child answers, "Yes, certainly". The shaman says, "Open your mouth, so that I can give you something more". The child obeys and receives in his mouth the point of the drinking horn from which he has been accustomed to drink palm wine. Boiling lead is immediately poured into the child's mouth, and he dies a quick but painful death. The vow, however, which the child has taken with his last words binds his spirit after death. The operation has succeeded, and the village has obtained in the ghost world a willing and obedient ally for the fight against the enemy.

Since in the opinion of the Batak the spirit of the child remains in contact with its body, the magical substance can be prepared from this. The body is dismembered, parts are charred with other magical ingredients, and the whole filtered into a pot. This magical substance is then divided among the shamans of the sub-sibs and is used to besoul, or make potent, all images and idols from which magical power is desired. The magic staff is one of the most important vehicles for the magical substance.[11]

Compared with this sacrificial complex this child sacrifice of the Batak has experienced a certain modification in its purpose and ritual; but the basic idea is the same in both sacrifices: a human being is killed in order to send it as a "voluntary" messenger into the world of the gods or spirits. He must die to enable him to help the surviving fellow men effectively as a spirit.

Similar sacrificial rites could be cited from several other areas of Indonesia, but these few examples must suffice. So much is certain that this whole sacrificial complex can be traced on the islands till Formosa where it links up with corresponding sacrificial rites among the Palaeo-Siberians. A. Gahs believes that the Palaeo-Siberians received the whole complex from the agrarian cultures.[12]

### AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE CLASSICAL AGE IN EUROPE AND WEST ASIA

This agrarian version of the sending ritual must be of high age, for its existence is known from historical documents of the classical age.

Strabo describes a rite of the ancient eastern Caucasians in the following words:[13]

> "The moon goddess, the supreme deity, has many temple servants many of whom prophesy with enthusiasm and rapture; but in case that one of these more enraptured persons wanders alone around in the forest, the superior priest commands to take him and to put him in fetters. For a year he is sumptuously fed. . .; then he is brought before the goddess as a victim. . . One with the sacred lance . . . stabs him through the ribs into the heart; after the body has been carried to a certain spot all assemble to participate in a propitiatory sacrifice".

One animal sacrifice in the Greek cult is certainly related to the agrarian variation of the *Aśvamedha* horse sacrifice. Plutarch has described this sacrificial complex[14] which, connected with the cult of Dionysos, was performed in several cities of Greece, as for instance in Elis, in Athens, and in Magnesia in Asia Minor. From this latter place we have a detailed description of the ritual.

"There, at the annual fair year by year the stewards of the city bought a bull, the finest that could be got, and at the new moon of the month at the beginning of seed time they dedicated it, for the city's welfare. The bull's sanctified life began with the opening of the agricultural year, whether with the spring or autumn ploughing we do not know. The dedication of the bull was a high solemnity. He was led in procession, at the head of which went the chief priest and priestess of the city. With them went a herald and the sacrificer, and two bands of youths and maidens. So holy was the bull that nothing unlucky might come near him; the youths and maidens must have both their parents alive, they must not have been under the *taboo*, the infection of death. The heralds pronounced aloud a prayer for "the safety of the city and the land, and the citizens, and the women and children, for peace and wealth, and for the bringing forth of grain and of all the other fruits, and of cattle". All this longing for fertility, for food and children, focuses round the holy bull, whose holiness is his strength and fruitfulness.

The bull thus solemnly set apart, charged as it were with the luck of the whole people, is fed at the public cost. The official charged with his upkeep has to drive him into the market-place, and "it is good for those corn-merchants who give the bull grain as a gift", good for them because they are feeding, nurturing, the luck of the State, which is their own luck. So through autumn and winter the bull lives on, but early in April the end comes. Again a great procession is led forth, the senate and the priests walk in it, and with them come representatives of each class of the State—children and young boys, and youths just come to manhood, *epheboi*, as the Greeks call them. The bull is sacrificed, and why ? Why not live out the term of his life ? He dies because he is so holy, that he may give his holiness, his strength, his life, just at the moment it is holiest, to his people. "When they shall have sacrificed the bull, let them divide it up among those who took part in the procession".

The mandate is clear. The procession included representatives of the whole State. The holy flesh is not offered to a god, it is eaten—to every man his portion—by each and every citizen, that he may get his share of the strength of the bull, of the luck of the State.

Now at Magnesia, after the holy civic communion, the meal shared, we hear no more. Next year a fresh bull will be chosen, and the cycle begins again. But at Athens at the annual "Ox-murder", the *Bouphonia*, as it was called, the scene did not so close. The ox was slain with all solemnity, and all those present partook of the flesh, and then the hide was stuffed with straw and sewn up, and next the stuffed animal was set on its feet and yoked to a plough as though it were ploughing. The death is followed by a resurrection. . .

Significantly, this killing of the sacred beast was always a terrible thing, a thing they fain would have shirked. They fled away after the dead not looking backwards; they publicly tried and condemned the axe that struck the blow.

The god to whom the bull was sacrificed or, more precisely, whom the bull represented was Dionysios. According to Plutarch[15], the bull also was called the "sanctifier". It was not only holy himself, sanctified, but he also had the power to "sanctify" others; and above all he sanctified by his death in the month of *Bysios* that fell at the beginning of spring, the time of the blossoming of many plants.

A sacrificial song of the women at Elis suggests that in ancient time the bull was "driven" to the temple which means that it was probably led from house to house so that every family participated in its sanctifying power.

The bull was torn into pieces when still alive, and the pieces were eaten raw by the celebrants with beans, bread cakes and wine. Some myths exist which suggest that this mode of sacrifice is very old: a myth relates, for instance, that Hippolyttus, the son of Theseus, was torn by horses; another myth tells us that Actaeus was transformed into a stag by Diana and torn by his own dogs; the same fate was suffered by Zagreus, the son of Zeus; in the myth of Orpheus, and in other myths.[16] All these modes of killing a victim suggest that the ancient Greeks were well aware of this agrarian custom of sacrifice by tearing the victim into pieces.

## AMONG PEOPLES IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD

Similar sacrificial rites are practised by peoples in other often widely separate parts of the world.

Of the peoples in the Near East, the Arabs of the fourth century, for instance, sacrificed a camel in a similar manner: The camel selected for was bound on the altar erected by heaping rough boulders into a platform and, after the chief of the group had led the participants at the sacrifice three times in solemn procession around the altar under the singing of hymns, he inflicted the first wound on the victim as the last words of the sacrificial hymn were still being sounded. At once he puts his lips to the wound and drinks the blood gushing from the wound. Now the whole crowd of people rush with swords at the animal, hack pieces of twitching flesh from it and devour them raw, in such a wild haste, that in a short time, between the rising of the morning star, when the ceremony began, and its fading at sun dawn the whole camel, body and bones, skin, blood and intestines were devoured.[17]

J. Lubbock relates an almost identical ritual among the Marimo, a South-African tribe related to the Bechuana. The ceremony is called the "boiling of the corn". The victim chosen is generally a young, short but stout man. He is seized by force or intoxicated with *Yala* and taken to the fields where he is killed amongst the wheat to serve as "seed" (so they phrase it). After his blood has coagulated in the sun, it is burnt along with the frontal bone, the flesh attached to it, and the brain; the ashes are scattered over the ground to fertilise it. The rest of the body is eaten.[18]

The Wamegi of the Usagara hills in East Africa used to offer human sacrifices of a peculiar kind once a year about the time of the harvest, which was also the time of sowing; for the Wamegi have two crops annually, one in September and one in February. The festival was usually held in September or October. The victim was a girl who had attained the age of puberty. She was taken to a hill where the festival was to be celebrated, and there she was crushed to death between two tree branches. The sacrifice was not performed in the fields, and my informant could not ascertain its object, but we may conjecture that it was to ensure good crops in the following year.[19]

Even in a country, as far distant from India as Mexico[20], a sacrifice was performed which strongly resembled the agrarian version of the sending ritual. This custom was found not only among the Aztecs, but also among the older peoples of the Maya culture.

Among the Toltecs the sacrificial ritual at the main temple was as follows:

> Six priests divided the function among themselves: the hereditary chief priest, Topiltzin, representing in a red mantle either Huitzilopochtli, or Tetzkatlipoca, according to whom he was sacrificing, the other five in white mantles but their bodies painted black. They seized their victim as soon as a solemn procession had brought him up the staircase to the platform. Just before they had opened the house of the god to whom they intended to sacrifice so that his terrible fate became visible to the populace. Then they stretched the man long on the convex table of slaughter made of stone and while four priests held his arms and legs, and the fifth with a

> snake-instrument his neck and head, the Topiltzin pierced his chest with a stone knife; from the open chest he tore with the hand out the heart—the vessel and the source of the warm blood, the seat of the soul. He lifted it up to the sun or to the sky, then placed it at the foot of the idol and again lifting it up with a golden spoon stuck it into the gaping mouth of the god.[21]

However, the ritual of the sacrifice was not everywhere the same; it varied according to the deity at which it was addressed. This sacrifice had decidedly a cannibalistic character. Often the god to whom the sacrifice was addressed, the chief priest, the king and the populace took part in the cannibalistic meal; this was done in order of rank. The share of the god was the blood which they smeared around his mouth and cheeks; the chief priest received from the sacrificer the heart of the victim, the king the legs and hands, the populace the rest. A portion of the flesh was reserved for the feeding of living animal fetiches, while the head was impaled as trophy on a pole. The door posts of the temple were smeared with blood as if the gods were indeed accustomed just here to look out for blood.[22]

At Cholula, a wealthy trading city of Mexico, the service of the Toltec god Quetzalkoatl was still more pronounced than in the capital where the Aztec god played the first role.

Forty days before the festival of the god the merchants of Cholula bought a slave well proportioned. Already the manner how the victim was acquired differs the god from his younger Aztec "father". The slave was bathed in a lake, then dressed in the god's clothes and till the time of the sacrifice held in divine honours, decorated with flowers, fed with exquisite meals and during the day singing and dancing led through the city. Only at night he could have noticed that he was closely watched.

Nine days before the day of sacrifice two priests announced in humble form that he would have to die. If he passed the rest of his days joyfully dancing and singing—not uncommon for a slave of low status of culture—this was accepted as a good augury. If he seemed depressed they tried to cheer him up with a concoction of blood and cocoa which allegedly made him forget his oncoming fate. On the day of sacrifice music and incense were to intoxicate him completely—and the certainty of their belief in his future reward will scarcely have incited them to pity with his fate.

At the actual sacrifice the ritual of the priest reverted to conceptions of cannibalism. The corpse was thrown down the stairs of the temple and removed by the merchants who had offered him up. They made their meal of him.[23]

Tetzkatlipoca, the Tlailotlac parallel and "brother" of the Aztec Huitzilopochtli, received on his day of honour a similar sacrifice; but the victim could be either the most beautiful prisoner of war, or a slave without blemish. For a whole year he enjoyed divine honours; twenty days before the sacrifice four beautiful brides were given to him, and five days later he was served the most exquisite dinners. The people took great trouble to keep him in good spirits.[24]

Sometimes, the ritual of the sacrifice varied a little. On the third annual festival of Huitzilopochtli the priests made the figure of the god from a mixture of various seeds with the blood of sacrificed children. A priest shot an arrow at the figure and pierced the "god". Then he performed the same rites as in a human sacrifice. He opened his chest, tore out the heart and offered it to the king, who ate it. The body of the figure was distributed in the different quarters of the city so that each inhabitant could receive his share.[25]

In ancient Peru similar human sacrifices were performed. Later they substituted an animal for the human victim; but the ritual of sacrifice remained the same. Thus in Cuzco a lamb was daily sacrificed to the sun. The sacrificer took the lamb under his right arm and turning his eyes to the sun prayed to the sun or to the god incorporated in the sun. Then he slit open the body of the lamb and took out the heart, the lungs and different other organs. The intestines and the blood were reserved as the share of the deity who ate and drank. The flesh of the victim was eaten raw in a common meal by the sacrificers. The blood was smeared on the figure of the god and on the door posts.[26]

But even until the last century similar sacrifices were performed in America, by the Pawnee. I quote J.G. Frazer:

> "The Pawnees annually sacrificed a human victim in spring when they sowed their fields. The sacrifice was believed to have been enjoined on them by the Morning Star, or by a certain bird which the Morning Star had sent to them as its messenger. The bird was stuffed and preserved as a powerful *talisman.* They thought that an omission of this sacrifice would be followed by the total failure of the crops of maize, beans and pumpkins. The victim was a captive of either sex. He was clad in the gayest and most costly attire, was fattened on the choicest food, and carefully kept in ignorance of his doom. When he was fat enough, they bound him to a cross in the presence of the multitude, danced a solemn dance, then cleft his head with a tomahawk and shot him with arrows. According to one trader, the squaws then cut pieces of flesh from the victim's body, with which they greased their hoes; but this was denied by another trader who had been present at the ceremony. Immediately after the sacrifice the people proceeded to plant their fields.[27]

## SUMMARY

One characteristic feature of this sacrificial complex is its very wide distribution over the whole world: from Africa over whole Asia till far into America, and from the high north of Asia into the tropical South Seas. Even if we had no reports about this sacrificial complex from very ancient time, its existence in such a wide distribution and among races belonging to so different stages of culture would suggest a high age.

It is perhaps significant that this sacrificial complex is peculiarly alive among agrarian peoples at various stages of development. Where it is found among shepherd races or nomadic hunters and mere foodgatherers, its adoption from agrarian races can be surmised, though not proved. It is consequently quite likely that this sacrificial complex came into existence in circles of an agrarian culture. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that this sacrifice is often addressed to the earth-mother, further, that the idea of fertility is so prevalent, that the victim is either a human being—a slave or a victim bought for sacrifice, or a domestic animal typical of agrarian cultures (a cattle, buffalo, or pig), that the magic power of blood is so strongly emphasised, and, finally, that the victim is cut or torn into pieces which are devoured or buried in the fields.

## NOTES

1. A. Gahs, 1926, 220 f.
2. *Cf.* W. Schmidt, 1926, 251 f.
3. Radlov-Katanov: Obrazcy, IX. 506-7.
4. A. Gahs, 1926, 223 f.—Gahs calls the above mentioned tribe 'Katchinzen', while G. Buschan calls them 'Katschinen', 1923, II, 279.
5. J. Curtin, 1909, 44-8.
   There are two direct references to the horse sacrifice of the Vedic Indians. The animal is "covered with rich trappings" and led thrice round the altar. It is accompanied by a goat which is killed first to "announce the sacrifice to the gods".
6. Sjerosevsky, Jakuty, I, 649-50; in A. Gahs, 1926, 223.
7. Krohn, in Globus, 1895, LXVII, 367-8; in: Gahs, 1926, 223.
8. H. Consten, 1920, II, 215 f.
9. R. Bleichsteiner, 1937, 209.
10. A. Grubauer, 1913, 350 f.
11. E.M. Loeb, 1935, 86 f.
12. A. Gahs, 1924/25 and 1928/29, 88 f.
13. Strabo: *Geographica*, 1. XI, *c.* 4.
14. *Cf.* J.E. Harrison, 1927, 87 f.; A. Baumeister, 1885, I, 472; M.P. Nilsson, 1925, 108; J.E. Harrison, 1903, 111 f.; J.G. Frazer, 1909, II, 295 f.
15. J.E. Harrison, 1927, 86.
16. E. Baltzer, 1868, 47 and 134; Chantepie de la Saussaye, 1925, II, 320.
17. Robinson Smith, 1907, 338; J. Henninger, 1942-5, 779-810.
18. J. Lubbock, 1870, 300.
19. J.G. Frazer, 1936, VII, 240.
20. Already in 1930, L. Adam had in an article (1930, V., 40 f.) suggested the existence of cultural relations between Asia (India and Tibet even!) and ancient America. Today these cultural relations are a well attested fact. *Cf.* W. Koppers, 1949.
21. J.G. Müller, 1855, 476.
22. J. Lippert, 1883, I, 320 f.
23. J.G. Müller, 1855, 590.
24. J. Lippert, 1883, I, 326; J.G. Frazer, 1936, VIII, 92 f., and IX, 276 f.
25. J. Lippert, 1883, I, 331.
26. J. Lippert, 1883, I, 357 f.
27. J.G. Frazer, 1936, VII, 238.

## 8

# PARALLELS TO THE *AŚVAMEDHA* AMONG THE AGRARIAN INDIAN TRIBES

AMONG the agrarian tribes of the Indian peninsula this sacrificial complex is addressed usually at a female deity, most often the earth mother, but often also a village goddess. Contrary to the pig sacrifice of the Gonds and Baigas which pays no attention to the blood of the victim, in the sacrifice of the agrarian tribes the victim's blood has a dominant magic significance. In other aspects both these sacrificial rituals have however retained many similarities.

### AMONG THE KHONDS

To what extent just in India this sacrificial complex of the primitive shifting cultivators is similar to that of the primitive hunters and nomadic shepherd tribes, can be shown by a detailed account of the so-called *Meriah* (*i.e.*, 'sacrifice') of the Khonds, a primitive agrarian tribe in Orissa. According to Dalton[1], the Khonds are a mixed race: they have Munda, Gond and Aryan blood. In their appearance they resemble much the ordinary Hindu of low caste. This fact is probably easily explained by the custom of female infanticide which formerly was widespread among them. They were thus forced to purchase their wives from outside. The Khonds are primitive agriculturists. In their religion too they are strongly influenced by their Hindu neighbours.

The following description of the human sacrifice as practised by the Khonds in former times is copied by J.G. Frazer[2] from reports of the British colonial officers S.C. Macpherson and J. Campbell. Frazer writes:

"The sacrifices were offered to the Earth-Goddess, *Tari Pennu* or *Bera Pennu*[3], and were believed to ensure good crops and immunity from all disease and accidents. In particular they were considered necessary in the cultivation of turmeric, the Khonds arguing that the turmeric could not have a deep red colour without the shedding of blood. The victim or *meriah*[4] was acceptable to the goddess only if he had been purchased, or had been born a victim—that is, the son or daughter of a victim father—or had been dedicated as a child by its father or guardian[5]. Khonds in distress often sold their children for victims, 'considering the beautification of their souls certain, and their death, for the benefit of mankind, the most honourable possible.' A man of the Panua (Pān) tribe was once seen to load a Khond with curses, and finally to spit on his face, because the Khond had sold for a victim his own child, whom the Panua wished to marry. A party of Khonds, who saw this, immediately moved forward to comfort the seller of his child, saying 'Your child has died and that all the world may live, and the Earth-Goddess herself will wipe that spittle from your face.' The victims were often kept for years before they were sacrificed. Being regarded as consecrated beings, they were treated with extreme affection, mingled with deference, and were welcomed wherever they went.[6]

A Meriāh youth, on attaining maturity, was generally given a wife, who was herself a Meriāh or victim, and with her he received a portion of land and farm-stock. Their offsprings were also victims.[7]

Human sacrifices were offered to the Earth-Goddess by tribal groups, smaller sections of the tribe, or by village communities, both at periodical festivities and on extraordinary occasions. The periodical sacrifices were generally arranged by organisers of the feast in such a way that each head of a family could at least once a year receive a shred of the human victim's flesh to bury it in his fields, generally about the time when his chief crop was laid down.

The ritual of performing this sacrifice was as follows:

Ten or twelve days before the sacrifice, the victim was dedicated by cutting off his hair, which, until then, had been kept unshorn. Crowds of men and women assembled to witness the sacrifice; none might be excluded, since the sacrifice was declared to be for all mankind. It was preceded by several days of wild revelry and gross debauchery.[8]

On the day before the sacrifice the victim, dressed in a new garment, was led forth from the village in solemn procession, with music and dancing, to the Meriāh grove, a clump of forest trees standing a little away from the village and untouched by the axe. Here they tied him to a post, which was sometimes placed between two plants of the *sankissār* shrub. He was then anointed with oil, ghee and turmeric[9] and adorned with flowers; and 'a species of reverence, which is not easy to distinguish from adoration', was paid to him throughout the day. A great struggle now arose to obtain the smallest relic from his person; a particle of the turmeric paste with which he was smeared, or a drop of his spittle, was esteemed of sovereign virtue, especially by the women. The crowd danced round the post to music, and addressing the Earth mother said, 'O God, we offer this sacrifice to you; give us good crops, seasons, and health'.[10]

"On the last morning the orgies, which had been scarcely interrupted during the night, were resumed and continued till noon, when they ceased, and the assembly proceeded to consummate the sacrifice. The victim was again anointed with oil, and each person touched the anointed part, and wiped the oil on his own head. In some places they took the victim in procession round the village, from door to door, where some plucked hair from his head, and others begged for a drop of his spittle, with which they anointed their heads. As the victim might not be bound nor make any show of resistance, the bones of his arms and, if necessary, his legs were broken; but often this precaution was rendered unnecessary by stupefying him with opium. The mode of putting him to death varied in different places. One of the commonest modes seems to have been strangulation, or squeezing to death. The branch of a green tree was cleft several feet down the middle; the victim's neck (in other places, his chest) was inserted in the cleft, which the priest, aided by his assistants, strove with all his force to close. Then he wounded the victim slightly with his axe, whereupon the crowd rushed at the wretch and cut the flesh from the bones, leaving the head and bowels untouched. Sometimes he was cut up alive. In Chinna Kimedy[11] he was dragged along the fields, surrounded by the crowd, who, avoiding his head and intestines, hacked the flesh from his body with their knives till he died. Another very common mode of sacrifice in the same district was to fasten the victim to the proboscis of a wooden elephant, which revolved on a stout post, and, as it whirled round, the crowd cut the flesh from the victim while life remained. In some villages Major Campbell found as many as fourteen of these wooden elephants, which had been used at sacrifices.[12] In one district the victim was put to death slowly by fire. A low stage was formed, sloping on either side like a roof; on it they laid the victim, his limbs wound round with cords to confine his struggles. Fires were then lighted and hot brands applied, to make him roll up and down the slopes of the stage as long as possible; for the more tears he shed the more abundant would be the supply of rain. Next day the body was cut to pieces.

The flesh cut from the victim was instantly taken home by the persons who had been deputed by each village to bring it. To secure its rapid arrival it was sometimes forwarded by relays of men, and conveyed with postal fleetness fifty or sixty miles. In each village all who stayed at home fasted rigidly until the flesh arrived. The bearer deposited it in the place of public assembly, where it was received by the priest and the heads of families. The priest divided it into two portions, one of which he offered to the Earth-Goddess by burying it in a hole in the ground with his back turned, and without looking. Then each man added a little earth to bury it, and the priest poured water on the spot from a hill gourd. The other portion of the flesh he divided into as many shares as there were heads of houses present. Each head of a house roled his share of flesh in leaves and buried it in his favourite field, placing it in the earth behind his back without looking. In some places each man carried his share of flesh to the stream which watered his fields, and there hung it on a pole. For three days thereafter no house was swept; and, in the district, strict silence was observed, no fire might be given out, no wood cut, and no strangers received. The remains of the human victim (namely, the head, bowels and bones) were watched by strong parties at the night of the sacrifice, and next morning they were burnt, on a funeral pile. The ashes were scattered over the fields, laid as paste over the houses and granaries, or mixed with the new corn to preserve it from insects. Sometimes, however, the head and bones were buried, not burnt. After the suppression of the human sacrifices, inferior victims were substituted in some places; for instance, in the capital of Chinna Kimedy a goat took the place of a human victim. Others sacrifice a buffalo. They tie it to a wooden post on a sacred grove, dance wildly round it with brandished knives, then, falling on the living animal, hack it to shreds and tatters in a few minutes, fighting and struggling with each other for every particle of flesh. As soon as a man has secured a piece he makes off with it at full speed to bury it in his fields, according to ancient custom, before the sun has set, and as some of them have to go far they must run very fast. All the women throw clods of earth at the rapidly retreating figures of the men, some of them taking very good aim. Soon the sacred grove, so lately a scene of tumult[13], is silent and deserted except for a few people who remain to guard all that is left of the buffalo, the head, the bones, and the stomach, which are burnt with ceremony at the foot of the stake[14]. V. Elwin, who in 1943 visited the Khonds gives an interesting confirmation of this description of the Meriah.[15] Elwin relates what the Khonds themselves had to say about their ancient traditions and practices in this sacrifice: "The victim, they said, was demanded by the *bhum*, the earth; it could be either male or female and could be either a Khond or a member of another tribe; the essential thing was that the victim must be bought. The Panos[16] used to take money on a sort of contract to produce a victim; the sum was always twelve rupees. If the Pano could not find a suitable victim, he would offer his own son or daughter. The victim was usually bought young and was looked after very well in the village. When he got old enough to realize what was going to happen, he was fettered; but he was still allowed many privileges. He was given the best food and he could have any girl he wanted, 'even the Manhi's wife'. When the time came for his sacrifice, he was tied with his face towards the pillar; his head was put through the fork and held down. At the time he was drunk with rice-beer and he was killed in the same way as the buffalo was killed at Rungapara.[17] His head and the cord and the chain with which he was tethered were kept in a basket in the priest's house. A little of the flesh and blood was offered in every field. The bones were taken away by visitors and buried in the boundaries of their villages. The penis and testicles, the nose, the ears, the lips, the tongue and the liver were cooked on the sacrificial hearth and offered to the goddess, after which they were buried in the middle of the village".

Chandra Chakraberty[18] adds to this description of the human sacrifice among the Khonds the following interesting details:

> "Human sacrifice (*meriah*) was prevalent among the Khonds in ancient days to their war god to ensure victory and to the earth goddess for fertility. The victim has to be of a different tribe, and was well-treated. If a female she was encouraged to have all the pleasures of life and to have children to promise satisfactory good crops. If a male to have all the delights he could wish. Women took pride to have sexual congress with him. Cultivators and herdsmen thought it lucky to give him a feast. The *zanee* (priest) officiated at the ceremony through the medium of the *toomba*, a Khond child under seven years of age.[19] For a month prior to the sacrifice there was much feasting and drinking with dancing round the *meriah* who was adorned with garlands in the sacred grove. On the day of the sacrifice the victim is stultified with sexual orgies and drinks, and the assembled multitude sing and dance—O goddess, we offer a sacrifice to you. Give us good crops in return, good time and good health. The victim made senseless by intoxication is thrown into the pit and his face is pressed down to die out of suffocation. Then the *zanee* and after him all the cultivators cut pieces of flesh from the victim's body and bury them in their grounds".

Dalton[20] writes that the human sacrifice of the Khonds was not restricted to the Khonds, but was also practised by the

Hindu castes of the same region. Thus in Jaipur human beings were sacrificed not only to the earth-mother, but also to the war god *Maniksoro*. The method applied there was the following:

> A stout wooden post, about 6 feet long was firmly rammed into the ground. Near it a narrow grave was dug. The victim now was bound by his long hairs to the post; the assistants of the sacrificer holding him at hands and legs so that the body with the face downward hangs over the pit. The sacrificer stands at the right, recites an invocation to the god and prays for victory in the battle and salvation "from the tyranny of kings and their officials". While he prays he hacks after certain passages at the neck of the unfortunate victim, but avoids to wound the victim lethally. Then the priest addresses his victim, assures him with soothing words, that he will soon have the honour to be devoured by the war god for their salvation, and that they would have celebrated a funeral worthy of him, and, if he still could not be reconciled to his fate he wanted to remind him that they had bought him from his parents for exactly this purpose. He is then beheaded, the body falls into the pit, while the bloody head remains on the post till the birds devour it".[21]

## AMONG OTHER CENTRAL-INDIAN TRIBES

The two tribes Chero and Kharwar who at present times speak an Aryan dialect perform, as the other tribes of their region, periodical sacrifices which take place every third year. Thus relates Dalton. With regard to the social relations of the two tribes Dalton states that the Cheros consider the Kharwars as their inferiors and as impure. According to him the Kharwars resemble physically the Santals, though they too, like the Cheros, speak a Hindi dialect. It appears that between the Cheros and Kharwars the same social relationship exists as between Gonds and Baigas, or Korkus and Nahals (or Ojhas).

Every third year they sacrifice a buffalo and other animals in the sacred grove (*sarna*) or on a rock near the village. The officiating priest, however, is not a man of their caste, but a

Bhuiya, a Kharwar or a Parheya. He is also known by the name Baiga. The deity to be honoured in this sacrifice is the patron goddess of the village. Her name is *Duar Pahar*, sometimes *Dharti* or *Purgahaili*, or *Daknai*. At times it is the jungle god *Dura*, who is probably identical with the *Darha* of the neighbour tribes.[22] Unfortunately Dalton does not relate any details about this periodical sacrifice of the Cheros and Kharwars.

The Bhuiyas of Bamra, Bonai and Gangpur in former times sacrificed human beings to their patron goddess, whom they called *Thakurani Maie* (princess mother). The sacrifices were performed by Bhuiya priests every third year.[23]

The Savaras or Sauras who at present speak an Uriya dialect, worship a female deity whom they call *Bansuri* or *Thakurani*. She is doubtlessly identical with the patron goddess of the Bhuiyas. Every year goats and fowls are sacrificed to the goddess, but once in ten years every village community offers to the goddess a buffalo, a boar, a sheep and twelve fowls. Because the Savaras do not, or did not, keep cattle they have to buy these sacrificial animals.[24]

The Bhumij, a Munda tribe, possessed in Dhalbhum a shrine dedicated to the goddess *Rankini*. The goddess demanded human sacrifices. Dalton writes[25] that it was openly admitted that in former times children were kidnapped and sacrificed at the shrine. He adds that the time is not long past since these sacrifices have ceased.

Until the year 1865 a very cruel game was played at the shrine of the goddess. In 1865 it was finally stopped. Two buffalo bulls were driven into a narrow enclosure, and on a elevated platform, from which the enclosure could be overlooked, the Raja and his courtiers were seated. After some ceremonies the Raja and his main priest shot with arrows at the buffaloes, and the others followed their example. The wounded and enraged animals attacked each other while hit by arrow after arrow. When the animals were so much wounded that they could not become dangerous any more the people invaded the enclosure and hacked the victims in pieces with battle axes.

It is said that in 1832 Ganga Narain, a step-brother of the ruling Raja, revolted against him, took him into captivity and dragged him into the mountains to sacrifice him. Ganga

Narayan, imitating the above mentioned buffalo sacrifice, beat his step-brother with a battle axe and forced his underlings to shoot arrows at him till he was dead.[26]

The Hos celebrate in January a feast which is called *Desauli Bonga*.[27] It begins with a sacrifice to *Desauli*, the village god, to whom they offer three fowls: a cock and two hens, one of them black. In addition they offer leaves of the Palas tree (*Butea frondosa*), bread of rice flour and sesame seeds. The sacrifice is performed by the village priest or by any old man acting as his substitute and knowing the ritual. He prays that the god may in the coming year protect them of all misfortune and illness, and secure them rain and a good crop. At some places they also remember the ancestors.

After this sacrifice all persons of the village wander around in the village armed with sticks to drive away the evil spirits; they sing, shout and abuse. Then they get drunk with rice beer, abuse each other and indulge also in sexual orgies. A human sacrifice is not performed. It is however not impossible that it was performed in the past and that the above mentioned rites are relics of such a sacrifice.

The Mundas too celebrate a feast in similar fashion, but the sexual licence between boys and girls at this festival is not as great as among the Hos.[28]

According to Dalton[29], the Korwas have more similarity with the Gonds than with the Munda tribes. They scarcely know the typical Munda myths nor do they worship the sun as their main deity. Their supreme deity is a goddess whom they call *Khuria Rani*. She dwells in a cave near a stream. All Korwas worship her; but she is in particular the patron deity of the former royal family of the Korwas. This family had to perform a great sacrifice in honour of the deity in each generation. Thirty to forty buffaloes with innumerable goats had to be killed in sacrifice.

In Mandla District the Gonds have the tradition that in former time a Brahmin boy was killed in sacrifice to god *Bura Deo*. In place of sandal wood with which ordinarily the forehead of the god is marked, it was then marked with the hair of the victim. It was believed that the god bathed in the victim's blood and played ball with his bones.

In Raipur District, the Gonds were believed to have kidnapped strangers and sacrificed them to their gods; they are said to have preferred Brahmins as victims.

Sarat Chandra Roy writes that the Oraons have a ceremonial hunt in summer (April-May). The day before the hunt they offer to *Chandi*, the goddess of the hunt and of war, a black (or red-brown) fowl or a goat for success of the hunt. All the men of the region (*parha*) are invited to the hunt and get their share of the animals bagged. They take the meat pieces to their village and give some pieces also to the families which could not send any men to the hunt. All of them preserved some pieces of the meat, dried them in the sun and later, when they were ready for the sowing, mixed these pieces into the seeds. The Oraons hoped that this would give them abundant crops, for *Chandi* is the goddess of fertility for men and animals.

S. C. Roy also mentions that the distribution of the meat pieces in the seed reminded him of the *meriah* of the Khonds, and he adds that in former times the Oraons were known to perform human sacrifice, especially to ward off epidemics and draught.[30]

According to S.C. Roy the Oraons sacrifice in periods of three to five years—the time interval varies in the different villages—a buffalo to their village god *Darha*. In the years when no buffalo sacrifice takes place smaller animals are offered to the deity. In some villages the buffalo sacrifice is performed but once in a generation.[31] But in addition to this a special sacrifice is celebrated in times of epidemics. The whole village community is assembled at a field dedicated to the village god. From its yield the expenses of the sacrifice are covered. The village priest or the tenant of the field first sacrifices to the supreme god *Dharmesh* a white cock and a red one to the ancestors. Then he sacrifices a red cock to *Darha* and at last the buffalo is killed in front of a post struck in the ground. It represents the god. After the sacrifice the priest places on the top of the post three pieces of the liver and some flesh from the neck of the victim. These pieces are nailed to the post with a short iron stick. The purpose of the sacrifice is to secure a good crop and protection against illness.

According to Dehon[32] the Hindu landlords and princes introduced into the Oraon villages a village goddess whom they called *Kuari* or *Mahadani*. But S.C. Roy[33] speaks of a male village god whom he calls *Mahadania*. This *Mahadania* wanted to be propitiated every tenth or twelfth year by a "great sacrifice" which formerly consisted of a human being, but is now of a buffalo, a cow or a sheep. But even in present times the Oraons scarcely leave their villages at certain seasons because they fear to be kidnapped and taken away for such a sacrifice.

According to Dehon such sacrifices took place mainly in the months of April and May before the beginning of the monsoon. The sacrifice took place in greatest secrecy and the slayer required for his purpose (fertility of his field) the tip of the ringfinger only and the nose of the victim. The body was buried.

Another popular village god of the Oraons is called *Chalo Pachho*. He receives an annual sacrifice of goats, pigs and fowls. Women are forbidden to take part in the sacrificial meal.

The veneration of the village deities as customary among the Maler shows much conformity to the religion of the Gonds with whom they conform in other aspects also.

According to Dalton[34] the Maler of the Rajmahal mountains sacrifice to the earth-mother *Kul Gosain* yearly at the time of sowing a castrated boar or he-goat. Poor people sacrificed a cock. The head of the family sacrificed the animal under a tree in whose neighbourhood the so-called *Mukmum* post was erected—a post put up in a fertility festival. Though it is the head of the family who performs this sacrifice, the village priest too attends the ceremony and drinks of the victim's blood. He at least pretends to do so. He receives as his fee one foreleg of the victim.

The village god of the Maler is called *Chal*; he is certainly identical with the *Chal Pachho* of the Oraons. Every third year he is offered a cow.[35]

In Chhindwara District of Madhya Pradesh the Mehras, Dhyimars, the Yerandia *Telis* (who extract oil from the castor oil plant) and other low castes celebrate at intervals in conjunction the festival of *Narayan Deo*. At this ceremony, which must take place at night, distinctions of caste are abolished. When the party of worshippers is assembled, a pig is killed by strangulation and cooked and eaten by all present. After this the worshippers venerate a block of wood of the *kadamb* tree (*Anthrocephalus cadamba*) which for them represents the god *Nārāyan*, and they then proceed to the liquor shop and drink together from the same cup. With cock-crow the festival ends and the caste distinctions are resumed. The worship of *Narayan Deo* is performed once in three or four years.[36]

C. Von Fürer-Haimendorf[37] relates that the hoe- cultivating Reddis every year sacrifice a pig to their village goddess *Mutielamma*. The feast is celebrated in spring, at the time when the mangoes ripen. After a bath the men set their dogs on a large fat boar and after an exciting chase, the boar was cornered and thrown struggling to the ground, where it was pinned down by a pole across its neck; its feet were fettered. The victim was then carried into the jungle to the stone of irregular shape which represented the patron goddess of the village. After a long prayer in which the village goddess was asked for protection, boiled rice was scattered to some fowls. After the fowls had eaten of the rice they were sacrificed in front of the stone of the goddess, their heads were placed before the stone, their bodies put aside. After that the pig was made to eat of the rice—a sign that its sacrifice was acceptable to the goddess. It was lifted high on its hind-legs so that its head hung down over the fowls' heads on the altar. The priest cut its throat with a knife. The blood that flowed was collected in a pot and the head was completely severed from the body and placed on the altar. The priest then made several deep reverences, bowing with folded hands. He then poured some water on the pig's head and it was considered a lucky sign when its mouth opened while the cold water touched the head. While these rites were enacted some of the men roasted the livers of the chickens and the priest placed them with renewed reverences beside the other offerings. This completed the ceremony, and all the food offerings were packed up in leaves. Nothing remained in front of the sacred stone and the men returned to the village, carrying the pig on the pole, and its head on the hands of a man. The chickens and the food-offerings were carried in a basket. In the village all preparations were made for a festive dinner. After a long dance and much drinking of palm wine the meal was ready. It consisted of millet and pork. The women too took part in the dinner, sitting a bit apart. Then another dance followed with invocations to the village goddess, to the earth-mother and many other hill gods.

Fürer-Haimendorf also believes that certain circumstantial evidence is on hand for the assumption that the Reddis are not quite innocent of human sacrifices.[38] The sacrifice was performed in April in honour of a female deity. But he could not get any information about the sacrificial rite; he was only told that the victim's blood, mixed with rice, was spread out in the jungle.

These examples may suffice to show that the sacrifices of the central Indian tribes which they address to the earth-mother or a village deity are frequently similar to the *meriah* of the Khonds, though at present human sacrifices have ceased. It should be mentioned that these sacrifices are performed by almost all tribes whether they speak an Aryan, Dravidian or Mundarian dialect. We saw that the first sacrificial type, that of the pig sacrifice of the Gonds and Baigas, did not have the same wide distribution; it was almost unknown among the Aryan-speaking tribes, while the Mundari-speaking tribes performed a sacrifice that was somewhat similar to the horse sacrifice of the nomadic animal breeders of Inner-Asia. This kind of sacrifice, as performed by the north-eastern Siberian hunting tribes, was found only among the Dravidian-speaking tribes. The fact that the second sacrificial form is common among more or less all the primitive tribes of Central India suggests that an agrarian culture is the basis of all three racial groups, or that it has later been imposed on them. It is not yet possible to decide which of the two possibilities is to be accepted.

## AMONG THE HINDU CASTES

High caste Hindus at present regard bloody animal sacrifices with aversion.[39] However, it cannot be denied that in the Vedic times and even later animal sacrifices and even human sacrifices were quite common in the whole of India.[40] H. Oldenberg, in his high esteem for Aryan culture, tried to explain the *Puruṣa medha*, as mentioned in the sacred scriptures of the Hindus as a matter of fact, merely as a logical construction and denied that it really happened, but his assumption is hardly correct.[41] For even in present time sacrificial rites can be found among many castes which remind us of the *meriah* of the Khonds.[42] However, the human victim has now generally been replaced by a buffalo. Yet quite a number of castes admit that it is in their tradition that in the past they performed human sacrifices.

Similar to the *meriah* of the Khonds is, for instance, the buffalo sacrifice which many Hindu castes in Central India perform at Dasehra (in autumn, before the sowing of the winter crop begins)[43]:

"The *patel* (headman) then buys a goat which should be black, or male buffalo calf (*hela*). Nowadays the Hindus prefer as victim a goat which they can afterwards eat themselves, while the flesh of a buffalo can be eaten only by low-caste people.

In the late afternoon all villagers are invited to assemble at the *patel's* house. From there they go in procession to the shrine of *Hanuman*, the tutelary god of the Hindu villages in the Nimar. There the *patel*, or another of the notables of the village takes a sword or a big knife and wounds the animal on the back near the tail. The lamed and profusely bleeding victim is dragged around in the village and driven back to *Hanuman's* shrine. A man walks behind the victim and pours water over the trail of blood it leaves behind. Sometimes the villagers take away the blood-soaked mud and carry it to their fields to ensure fertility.

Finally the village headman cuts off the victim's head. The flesh of the sacrificial victim is distributed among the worshippers, taken home, boiled and eaten with a dish of rice. If the victim is a buffalo calf, the *patel* strikes it with his sword, but does not kill it. It is the village watchman (*kotwal*), a low-caste man, who kills the victim with an axe, cuts it to pieces and distributes the flesh among his caste fellows. The higher castes are not permitted to eat buffalo meat. The skin of the victim is taken by the *kotwal*, while its bones, horns, entrails, etc. are buried. Sometimes the victim is a boar. Such a sacrificial victim is fully buried after it has been slain, because not even Balahis may eat the flesh of domesticated pigs.

After the sacrifice all the villagers return to their houses. They cut lemons in halves and lay them on the threshold of their doors, at the gates of their court-yards and hay-lofts. Also the bullock-carts, ploughs and other agricultural implements are blessed in the same manner. The Balahis offer not only lemons, but also white pumpkins (*boria khola*). In the evening there is a festive meal in all the houses. Wealthy farmers invite their servants also to the meal if they are of the same caste, else they send the dishes to their houses".

In this connection a ceremony is significant which I found performed in at least one village: In the evening of the principal feast day of Dashera, after sunset, the men of the Balahi caste in the village Binankhera assemble at the house of the *kotwal* who entertains them with a few bottles of country liquor (*daru*). Also the village headman supplies a few bottles so that the men get into the right mood for the performance of the following ceremony.

The *kotwal* brings an earthen pot (*handi*) into which he pours several handfuls of ashes. Then he adds a *cauri* shell, several spiced wheat cakes (*bajia*), a coil of human hair, a few pods of red pepper and pours liquor over the whole mixture. The pot with all its contents is called *bal* (offering). Around the earthen pot the *kotwal* puts a netting of ropes (*sikka*). Then a bamboo pole is pushed through the netting and the pot is lifted up by two men who place themselves at each end. The *kotwal* spreads a sheet over the pot.

About an hour before midnight the *kotwal* fetches a big brass vessel into which he pours an equal quantity of water and country liquor. Then he and the carriers of the *bal*, accompanied by the other Balahis, proceed to the shrine of the village god, called *melda deo*. From the shrine of the village god the procession now takes a circuitous route through the whole village, not excluding a single house. All the way the *kotwal* sprinkles his liquor diluted with water while the other men make a lot of noise and shout incantations against the evil spirits, surrounding the village. The whole performance is an exorcism of the evil spirits threatening the residents of the village.

While the Balahis wander through the village, shouting noisely, the owners of buffalo calves are anxiously concerned to prevent their animals hearing the sound of the exorcism. They try to drown the noise of the procession by making even more noise near the sheds where the animals are kept. They beat tin cans or brass vessels, and shout as loudly as they can. For they believe that the spirit of the *bal* lives in male buffalo calves, and that consequently their own calves would die if they heard the words which the Balahis shout during the procession.

On the following day the Balahis carry the *bal* around in the village, again visiting every house and begging for foodstuff and grain, or old clothes. When all have paid their dues, the earthen pot is thrown away, somewhere outside the village.

A similar sacrifice is performed by the Mahars of Maharashtra, as described by A. Robertson.[44] The so-called *Potraja* or buffalo kings are a sub-division of the Holaya (Mahar) caste who have an ancestor who became a buffalo. At a certain time of the year they celebrate a feast at which several buffalo bulls and sheep are sacrificed to a female deity, the wife of the ancestor. The officiating priest bites with his teeth through the throat of a lamb and drinks its blood. On the last day of the feast he carries, completely naked, boiled rice on his head through the whole village and spreads it everywhere. Then he slaughters a sheep at the four corners of the village. After his return he receives a considerable share of the meat of the sacrificed buffalo and sheep.

In Berar, north of Hyderabad, also a buffalo is sacrificed on *Dasehra*. The village headman wounds the animal with his sword at the nose and the leader of the Mahar community kills it then.[45]

For Bengal Nirad C. Chaudhuri describes this sacrifice in his own inimitable way: "In Bengal Durga Puja is the greatest festival of the Bengali Hindu, of this there is no doubt, but it is difficult to say what it is besides. So many strands and layers of thought, beliefs and emotions have gone to its making that to try to come at its core, as distinct from the superimposed layers, would be, in the hands of an amateur, about as fruitful as to try to lay bare the solid core of a cabbage. As we performed it there was in the ritual the idea of a beneficent mother goddess as well as of a destructive mother goddess, the idea of a daughter separated from her mother and rejoined to her only for three days in a very human sense and not in the more esoteric sense of Persephone coming back to Demeter, the idea of martial ritual held on the eve of a campaign, the idea of a goddess of the lower world demanding the blood of certain animals and conferring strength on her worshippers in return, and, along with it, the idea of the more sunny sacrifice of the Aryan peoples, shared alike by the Hindu, the Greek, and the Roman, which even a Christian Pater and a Christian Keats could partly understand and partly wonder at. Altogether, it is a medley which has a way of making simplified explanations look ridiculous. . .

The image of the goddess was pleasant enough despite her ten arms and ten different weapons in each of the hands, despite the grimacing lion on which she stood, and despite the villainous demon who kneeled at her feet in a defiant posture . . . The goddess had the beaten-gold complexion, slanting eyes, and the amygdaloid facial outlines of the goddesses of northern Buddhism. . .

The festival lasted five days, of which the first, a day of the sixth phase of the moon, was only the prologue, and the last was the day of immersion and farewell, so that, of full and regular worship, there were three days. The last or immersion day was very important and had a special character of its own . . .

The day of regular worship began with a tune played by the Indian oboe to the accompaniment of a simple pipe and a timbrel, and with the taking out of the sacrificial goats for feeding on jack-fruit leaves by us and the boys. These animals were our special charge. But we did not venture near the buffalo. In the early morning the priests carried on some preliminary worship in which we felt no interest, but about ten o'clock the excitement mounted, as the time of the sacrifice drew near.

The first signal for it was the arrival of the drummers, cymbal and gong beaters, and other musicians, all Musalmans, who took their stand on one side of the pavilion. In the inner house there was hurry and bustle among the ladies, who were doning their best Benares silk *saris* to see the sacrifice and make their offering. The servants, with an expert air, examined the long line of heavy scimitars hanging from brackets and took down one or two. And then, as the bells began to ring in the worship hall and heavy columns of incense-bearing smoke rose from it, they stepped briskly up to us and made their selection of goats. The animals seemed to have a foreboding of what was going to happen to them and began to bleat and to resist, but they were dragged away to the tank to be bathed and decorated with garlands, and then dragged again towards the worship hall. Before the hall stood the sacrificial altar, no romantic thing, but a matter-of-fact wooden pillar, scooped out at the top and left with two branches on each side with two holes in them for a rod to pass through and make fast the necks of the goats.

The priest stood quietly, scimitar in hand. At a signal from him two of the servants caught hold of a goat, lifted it and put its neck between the branches of the wooden pillar and rapidly fixed it with the rod. As one of the servants took hold of the ears and horns of the goat and the other of its hind legs, and they together, pulling with all their strength in opposite directions, made its body taut, the animal set up a hideous bleating. But its hoarse blare was drowned by the beating of the drums, cymbals and gongs, and the frenzied shouts of the spectators: 'To the pleasure and victory of Mother Durga!' In a flash the scimitar descended, the animal lay writhing on the ground, its legs stretching and bending, blood spurting out of the neck, the tongue in the severed head almost cut in two by the last snapping of the dying animal's jaws, and the eyes staring out of the head. The priest quickly laid aside the scimitar, kneeled down and took some spurting blood and the head in a platter and rushed to the goddess to put the offering at her feet. It went on like this, one goat followed another, till blood flowed in a trickle down the slope of the yard. We are told that this was nothing and that at Mathkhala, where we had some religious property and another *puja*, the blood actually ran into the tank.

The buffalo sacrifice was a grandeur affair. Not only were the scimitars examined more carefully for it, and the heaviest and the sharpest chosen, not only was a new wooden sacrificial frame of impressive size erected, but also a special priest arrived from Mathkhala. He was a very handsome and fair man, clean-shaven and stern of mien, and immensely powerful, although nearing sixty. No risks could be taken with the buffalo sacrifice, for if the scimitar stuck it meant ruin for the house:

it signified that the goddess in her displeasure had refused the offering. Therefore on the day of the buffalo sacrifice particular alertness could be read on the face of everybody. All the members of the family, including my aged uncle and the other elders, were there. As the bathed and garlanded buffalo was made fast in a trice by three or four servants my relatives fell on it, rubbing its neck with melted butter so as to make the skin soft. The scene was the same as at the goat sacrifice, but instead of the familiar priest stood that singularly handsome old man, with the scimitar uplifted in a trembling hand. He waved it for a moment, and then brought it down on the neck of the animal.

The scene which followed seemed like an orgy even to us who were inured to these scenes. All the servants, all the spectators, all my relatives, old, middle-aged and young, fell on the convulsive and, as it seemed to us, mountainous carcass of the buffalo, smeared themselves and the others with its blood, kneaded the dust of the yard into a dough with blood, and pelted one another with the mixture. This went on for some fifteen minutes, while I looked on aghast and awestruck from the back door of the Mut under the Bakul. After this rampage the yard exhaled the mixed smell of blood, moist earth, decayed flowers, and incense for the whole day and even till the next day.

When about an hour after the sacrifice we sat down to chant the praise of the goddess in chorus the mood had miraculously changed. My old uncle gave the word: 'The world is pain. . .', and we began gravely and slowly:

'The world is pain
Its load all bearing past;
Never pine I, never thrist,
For its kingdom vain.'

'Rosy are her feet,
A shelter free of fear;
Death may whisper 'I am near';
He and I shall smiling meet.'

Then followed song after song, song of mortal to the immortal, of the helpless and weak to the strong, of the weary and heavy-laden to the comforter. There were even songs voicing perplexity at the destructive fury of the Great Mother. These songs could not with propriety be sung by men, nor by any of the gods, because it was for the good and deliverance of both that the Great Mother was killing the demons.

Accordingly, they were put into the mouth of the victims, that is, the demons.

The evening which followed had no suggestion of what we had seen in the morning, not of what we had sung at midday. It was neither orgiastic nor devotional, but gay and heart-free, with lights blazing, a whole crowd laughing and jostling, and the wild music more self-abandoned and noisy than ever.

To us, thinking the lights were the glory of Bangram and, in actual fact, they were sophisticated. For we had crystal-glass chandeliers, branched wall brackets, glass bells of different colours—clear, red, green, amber, some of which had lamps burning oil, other candles. . . In addition, Japanese and Chinese lanterns of coloured papers were hung all around with brilliant and varied effect. It was under this light that the ritual of light took place.

This ritual was nothing more than the priest waving five brass lamps fixed to a branched bracket in the face of the gods and the goddesses. He held the lamp bracket in one hand and a bell in another and moved backward and forward and from side to side in a sort of subdued dance to the tune of the shrill music. The women, in shining silk saries as before and loaded with gold ornaments, stood at the sides like two rows of ballerinas, making on the whole a well-composed scene even when in motion. . . The three days of regular worship were taken to be the three days which *Durga* had come to spend with her mother *Menaka* who was the wife of the mountain Himalaya, and the fourth day was the day of her departure. Indeed, on the afternoon of that day she departed bodily, for the image was taken out of the worship hall, carried in a procession to our big front tank, and thrown into it. But before the preparations for the procession began we had a short ceremony which showed that even in Bengal the memory had not wholly died out that this day was the day of the ceremonial opening of the campaigning season. This military character in the form of the festival of *Desehra*, the day still retains in northern India.

All the male members of the family sat in a circle in the open, with trays full of ritualistic accessories round them as well as two heavy scimitars, glistening and, to us, fearsomely suggestive. The priest, the same man who had sacrificed the buffalo, came up, uttered many incantations, marked our forehead with vermilion and, last of all, touched our head with one of the scimitars . . .

By that time the high platform of the worship hall had been cut away to make a ramp for the goddess to come down. The women who were there, again in their silken clothes and with their last offerings, were as near crying as they could be. Slowly the heavy framework holding together all the gods and goddesses was raised from the floor by our servants, the elders just keeping in touch (literally) for form's sake, and a great heaving and halloing began . . . But willy-nilly, the throng and, with it, the images proceeded towards the tank. As the procession moved forward the women cried as if they were looking on a funeral procession going out of the house. The faces of the gods were kept turned towards the house, just as the heads of the dead are, for the divinities could never be allowed to turn their back on their worshippers. As the images went down with a crash into the water, everybody on the bank, and there were at times two hundred people there, fell to greeting one another, touching the feet of the elders and embracing all. This was the evening on which we were expected to forgive every injury, bear no malice, and have love in our heart for all mankind.[46]

In South India too we find similar sacrifices among the lower castes. Some Boyas (originally hunters) in Bellary District hold tax-free land, because they propitiate through a certain sacrifice, *Bhuta bali*, the village goddess. This is done on the last day of the village goddess' feast and is performed to ensure the welfare of the village. The Boya priest cuts his hair at midnight, sacrifices a sheep or a buffalo, mixes its blood with rice and forms small balls which he distributes at the boundary of the village. When he begins his circuit around the village, the villagers shut their doors, because it is considered inauspicious to watch him at his performance. He returns early in the morning to the temple from which he had started, bathes and receives new clothes from his fellow villagers.[47]

The Gazetteer of the South Arcot District describes a buffalo sacrifice of the Udāyar as follows: "The village of Mangalam in the South Arcot district is chiefly interesting on account of its being the only village in the district where buffalo sacrifices on any scale are still regularly made. Buffaloes are dedicated to the *Kali* shrine in Mangalam even by persons in the Salem, Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts, and the village is commonly known as Maduvetti Mangalam, or buffalo-sacrificing Mangalam. When a man or any of his belonging gets seriously sick, he consecrates an animal to this shrine, and, if the illness ends favourably, it is sent to its fate at the temple on the date of the annual sacrifice (May-June). When the buffalo is dedicated, a piece of saffron-coloured cloth in which is placed some small coin and a *cadjan* (palm) leaf containing an announcement of the dedication, is tied to its horns, and it is allowed to roam wherever it likes through the fields. On the day of the sacrifice, fourteen of the best of the animals which have been dedicated and brought to the temple are selected, and seven of them are tied to an equal number of stone posts in front of the goddess' shrine. The *pujari* (priest), who is an Udayan by caste, then walks down the line, and beheads them one after the other. The goddess is next taken round in a car, and, on her return to the temple, the other seven buffaloes are similarly killed. The animals which are not selected are sold, and the proceeds paid into the temple treasury."[48]

## AMONG THE HILL TRIBES OF NORTH-EAST INDIA AND BURMA

Similar sacrifices are in evidence from Assam and Burma. The victim here is often a human being.

The Khasis[49] have a goddess *U Thlen* in the house in the form of an actual snake. To propitiate her and to secure her protection a human sacrifice is performed. But the fingers and toes only of the victim are sacrificed with his blood. The victim is killed with a stick which has a silver knob at one end, because there should be no iron on the weapon. The body of the victim is thrown into a deep hole.

A goat is sacrificed to the goddess Jaubei when she has been offended through a crime. The goat must be without blemish, of white colour, completely full-grown, but yet without a kid. On the altar of clay or mud the following sacrificial ingredients are spread out: bread cakes, pumpkin, young shoots of the oak, unboiled rice and rice beer. The head of the goat must be cut off with one stroke, then it is cut up. Five, seven or nine pieces are offered on the altar. If only five pieces are offered, they are: pieces of the liver, heart, lungs, kidney and flesh from the back. If the number of pieces is seven, then a piece of the spleen and a piece of small gut are added. If the number of pieces is nine, they also add a piece of the great gut and two pieces of the appendix.

In order to ensure a quick repetition of the sacrifice the goddess sends a sickness or some other misfortune.

The ritual of the sacrifice differs in the various clans.[50]

The Angami, Sema, and Lhota Nagas believe that there is no better way of ensuring a good crop of rice than to kill a man and to bury pieces of his flesh in the fields or to hang them up or to hide them in the grain bins. Head, hands and feet were with preference put up in the fields. These magic beliefs also resulted in torturing the victims, mostly prisoners from raids, or bought slaves, who were hacked alive into pieces, after they had been intoxicated with rice beer. The flesh was then for the above mentioned purposes distributed among the villagers.[51]

The Konyak Nagas sacrificed *mithuns* and pigs at the great village feast at the beginning of the harvest. As an introduction of the feast the descendant of the founder of the village goes to his field and cuts from each rice crop some ears which he then hangs up in his house.

The killing of the pig is no enjoyable sight. It is carried out not by its owner, but by the eldest member of his clan, who for this service receives the heart and the kidneys. While two men hold the animal, he stabs the pig with a pointed bamboo splint into the chest below the ribs. It probably is a slight consolation for the unfortunate victim that the slayer addresses it with the appeasing words: "We do not send you on a bad path, we are sending you on a good path; bear us no grudge".

The use of metal weapons at the slaying of the pig is strictly prohibited.[52]

A report about human sacrifices among the north-eastern Nagas has been given by Needham who in 1888 crossed the regions between Assam and the Hukong valley. The whole of the Nagas residing in the south of the Pātkoi range are designated Rāngpāng Nagas, and those on the north side Gūṃ'lans, and the terms are used by the Nagas themselves as well as by our plains people, when speaking about either tribe.

The Rāngpāngs are all human sacrificers, but not so the Gūm'lans, and the skulls of their victims may be seen hanging up under the eaves in the front verandah of their houses. The custom is not a yearly one, owing chiefly, I suppose, to the difficulty of procuring a sufficient number of victims and on the score of expense, for the ceremony entails the killing of numerous buffaloes, or cows, pigs, fowls, etc. and giving of a huge feast, to which many kinsmen and friends, even from a distance have to be invited. It is performed in about every 9 or 10 years in, I believe, propitiation for health, good weather, good harvests, and victory over enemies. As, in addition to the livestock required for the feast given on these occasions, the expenditure of rice, both for food and for brewing liquor, is very heavy, the ceremony is one which is usually performed after a bumper harvest.[53]

Sometimes enemies taken in battle, but oftener slaves, who have to be purchased, are sacrificed. The sacrificial *modus operandi* was thus briefly described to me. The victim, having been tied hands and feet, is made to stand on the edge of the front verandah of the sacrificer's house, and his (or her) hair having been seized, and the head forcibly pulled forward and bent downward, a man, hitherto hidden from view, steps out from one side, and severs it from the trunk with one stroke of his Singpho knife, one of which every Naga carries. As soon as the head has been severed four or five near relations or kinsmen of the sacrificer rush forward, seize the trunk, cut open the chest, and rummage about for the heart, and the one who succeeds in getting hold of it first is looked upon as a very lucky person. After this, the fingers and toes are cut off, and stuck on pointed slips of bamboos close to the sacrificer's house, where they remain until they rot away, and the body is thrown away uphill to propitiate the hill sprite.

The head is cleaned of its flesh, and the pieces having been buried close to the sacrificer's house, a stone is placed over the spot, and a piece of a prickly shrub called *Moga phun* (*phun* means a tree in Singpho) by the Singphos, which bears a red berry about the time of the *Bihu*, is planted close to it.

If the victim has been purchased by a subscription among several relatives, and this is apparently a common event, the skull is divided among them, the man giving most money getting the lion's share to decorate his house with. One sex is as good as another for sacrificial purposes, and a child, however small, provided it has cut all its teeth is as good as an adult. If the victim's hair is long and worth keeping, it is used to ornament hats, etc. if not, it is thrown away. Women and children are permitted to witness the disgusting ceremony, and at night singing and dancing, to which all are invited, goes on until a late hour.

I am told that the victims are sometimes given large quantities of *mod* shortly before the time fixed for sacrifice. . .

"Western Rengmas have in the past, before their country was taken over, indulged in human sacrifice at times when they have been unable to obtain heads in war . . . On one occasion they captured an Angami from Tophema, and kept him till the young rice began to sprout. Then he was killed and his head, hands and feet were hung from the tree top, as if they were those of an enemy killed in war. There was no one whose duty it was to bury the trunk, so it was taken by the village burier and stuck in a fork of a tree outside the village. But the sacrifice did not turn out well. The wretched victim in his death agony swept the ground with his hand, and this caused the crops to be damaged by wind that year."[54]

"The Lhota Nagas used to beat a sacrificed bull to death as slowly as possible, but now they cut the skin over the heart and push a sharpened stick home."[55]

Not only the Nagas, other tribes too in North-East India offered human sacrifices in the ritual of which elements of the Vedic horse sacrifice appear, but in the type which is popular among the agrarian peoples. Thus from a very early period, the practice of human sacrifices was common among the Chutiyas, the pre-Ahom rulers of Upper Assam, whose priests or Deoris were in the habit of offering human sacrifices at the Copper Temple at Sadiya and elsewhere, the object of their worship being *Durga* under the name of *Kesāi Khātī*, the eater of raw (human) flesh. These sacrifices were offered on certain stated occasions, and also to avert special calamities, such as cholera, small-pox, and drought.

After the subjugation of the Chutiyas by the Ahoms, the Deories were still permitted to continue their ghastly rites, but they were usually given, as victims, criminals who had been sentenced to capital punishment. When none such were obtainable, a particular section of the population or *khel* (known as the *Barauli Khel*) was called upon to produce one, in return for which certain privileges were granted to the members of the *khel*. On a woman of the *khel* becoming pregnant, the astrologers were called on to say whether the child would be a boy or a girl, and if they predicted that it would be a boy, the mother was carefully looked after, and the child anointed, as soon as it was born, with a paste made of tamarind and *matikalāi* (*Phaseolus radicatus*). When a sacrifice was thought necessary, volunteers[56] were called for, and some person usually came forward of his own accord; if not, a victim was taken by force. In either case, the victim was shaved, anointed with the paste of tamarind and *mātikalāi*, and decked with gold and silver ornaments. He was then conducted before the image of the goddess when he prostrated himself, and was promptly decapitated by the *Bar Deori* or big priest. The body was left on the spot until the following morning, when it was removed. Victims were taken only from amongst the juvenile male members of the clan; on attaining full age, they became exempt, and were allowed to marry and settle down. According to Dalton, it was necessary that the victims to be immolated should be of pure caste and perfect form, the slightest blemish or mutilation rendering them unfit to be offered to the goddess . . .

For some time preceding the sacrifice, the victim to be immolated was detained at the temple, where he fared sumptuously, till in sufficiently plump condition to suit the supposed taste of the Gucāni. On the day appointed, he was led forth, magnificently attired and decorated with gold and silver ornaments, to be shown to the multitude that assembled on the occasion; he was then withdrawn and led by a private path trodden only by the officiating priests and their victims to the brink of a deep pit, where he was divested of the fineries and decapitated, so that the body fell into the pit. The head was added to the heap of ghastly skulls that were piled in view of the shrine.[57]

The prevalence of the custom of offering human sacrifices amongst the Koches is known to us from a statement in the Vainçāvali of Rāja Nārāyaṇa Kuar . . . It is not stated there how the victims were obtained, but it appears from the *Haft Iqlīm* that on some occasions at least persons were found willing to come forward as voluntary victims. Such persons were known as *Bhogis*, and from the time when they were announced that the goddess had called them, they were treated as privileged persons. They were allowed to do whatever they liked, and every woman was at their command, until the annual festival came round, when they were sacrificed to the goddess. Some members of the family of the Darrang Rajas, who migrated to Nowgong and ruled the country between Roha and Dharamtul, are said to have offered an annual human sacrifice, the victim being any person of sound health and body who might be caught abroad after midnight.[58]

While the major section of the Syntengs seem to be little influenced by Hinduism, their kings had formally adopted Hindu religion and belonged to the Śākta sect. Human sacrifices were annually performed in a temple of *Dūrga* or *Kāli* in the district Fāljur, and occasionally also in the temple of the goddess *Jainteśvarī* in the capital Nijpāt or Jaintispur. "Persons frequently voluntarily came forward as victims. This they generally did by appearing before the Rāja on the last day of Çrawan, and declaring that the goddess had called them. After due enquiry, if the would-be victim or *Bhoge khaora*[59] were deemed suitable, it was customary for the Rāja to present him with a golden anklet and to give him permission to live as he chose, and to do whatever he pleased, compensation for any damage done by him being paid from the royal treasury. But his enjoyment of these privileges was very short. On the *Navami* day of the *Durga Puja*, the *Bhoge khaora*, after bathing and purifying himself, was dressed in new attire, daubed with red sandalwood and vermilion, and bedecked with garlands. Thus arrayed, the victim sat on a raised dais in front of the goddess and spent some time in meditation (*japa*) and in muttering *mantras*. Having done this, he made a sign with his finger, and the executioner, after uttering the usual sacrificial *mantras*, cut off his head, which was placed before the goddess on a golden plate. The lungs were cooked and eaten by such *Kāndrā yogis* as were present, and it is said that the royal family partook of a small quantity of rice cooked in the blood of the victim. The ceremony was usually witnessed by a large crowd of spectators from all parts of the Jainti parganas."[60]

Among the Manipuris too, human sacrifices are said to have been customary in former times, and even in present days in times of drought or a cholera epidemic people might get scared through the rumour that victims are sought for the spirits. This conforms more or less with what we heard about the human sacrifices of the Chins and Nagas. However, the Manipuris have no native goddess to whom they sacrifice human beings, as for instance *Kecha-khati* of the Bodo tribes or *Kopili* of the Syntengs. What is found in chapter two of the *Thika kalpa*, a manuscript *puthi* found in the Manipur State library, about how human sacrifices are to be made, after the royal consent has been obtained, on the occurrence of public calamities, such as war, or for the purpose of obtaining great wealth . . . An enemy, a sick person, an eunuch, one who is infirm or has defects or scars should not be offered. The victim should be bathed and properly decorated, and then brought before the goddess. The person offering the sacrifice should turn his face towards the north, and the victim should face the east. Water should then be sprinkled on the victim, and the following *mantra* uttered: "Oh goddess living on the golden mountain, I offer this sacrifice to thee! He is good and stout and without blemish. I bind him to a post! I offer this sacrifice to remove my misfortune. Oh goddess, accept him. Although I kill him, I give him salvation."[61]

The Kus in the upper Semru river in North-Arakan are said to kill a *gayal* bullock on certain occasions slowly by numerous stabs with the spear, to collect its blood in bamboo vessels and to drink it. In former times they are said to have killed human beings in the same manner.[62]

A Lushai, who has killed any game, has to perform the *Ai* ceremony like a person who has killed a human being. But the details of the ritual and the number and kind of the domestic animals to be sacrificed are different. This ceremony is supposed to give on the one hand protection against the spirit of the killed man, resp. animal, and on the other hand the person who has performed it power over this spirit in the other world after his death.[63]

"*Khazangpina* is the most important sacrifice performed by the Lakhers. It is a sacrifice to the god *Khazangpa* (supreme god of the Lakhers) with the object of pleasing him and inducing him to bless the sacrificer and his wife with good health and with children, to give him good crops and fertile domestic animals, and to make him rich. The sacrifice must be performed by the head of the house, and the animal sacrifice may be either a pig or a fowl. . . It is important that the sacrifice should be performed at the correct place, which varies with different clans. Some clans sacrifice near the hearth on the side of the house on the upward slope of the hill; some near the main post at the back of the house; some near the main post at the front of the house; some near the bed; some at the front of the verandah wall.

As soon as the animal has been slaughtered by stabbing it under the right shoulder with an arrow, certain parts of it, known as the *phavaw*, are set aside for *Khazang*. Some of the *phavaw* are raw and some are cooked. The raw *phavaw* of a fowl consist of its tongue, its blood, and its tail feathers, and the cooked *phavaw* of a little of its liver and comb, some rice, some floor, a little cooked meat and gravy, and a little salt. The raw *phavaw* of a pig consist of its lips, its ears, its tongue, its tail, one toe from the right fore-leg, its bladder, its penis, and the fore-leg from which a toe has been removed. The cooked *phavaw* consist of a little liver, a little of the intestine, a little of the heart and stomach with a little meat, rice, salt, and gravy. The raw *phavaw* are first placed on a plantain leaf laid across the *tow maichas* (small stools). The *phavaw* to be cooked are then cooked . . . and half of the *phavaw* is eaten by the sacrificer and his family, and the other half is placed with the raw portions on the plantain leaf . . . The head of the pig is cooked by itself . . . it can be eaten only by the members of the sacrificer's clan. . . The pig's head is hung inside the roof above the place at which it was killed . . .

*Khazangpina* is not performed every year, but only when it is thought necessary, as when the householder or his wife has ill health or their domestic animals die. When *Khazangpina* is being performed, fellow-villagers may enter the sacrificer's house, but strangers may not. . .

Before the pig is actually killed the sacrificer intones a chant. . .

After finishing the chant, the sacrificer places some *sahma* (rice beer) and flour in the pig's mouth, and then stabs it with an arrow under the right shoulder.[64]

In Chapi . . . a red cock is sacrificed as a preliminary sacrifice, and three years later a pig is sacrificed. This sacrifice is repeated every four to five years. (365)

"While *Khazangpa* is the supreme god, every person is believed to have a sort of tutelary deity or guardian angel, known as *Zang*." (350)

"*Zangda* is a sacrifice to *Zang* . . . It is intended to ensure the good health, fertility, and happiness of a married couple or of their children, and to save them from getting nightmares and from suffering from sores. For this sacrifice a fowl must be killed . . . A gourd spoon *phiatla* containing water and a little rice is placed on the floor of the house, an incision is made in the bird's mouth and it is allowed to bleed into the gourd; some feathers are pulled out of its tail and placed on the floor near the gourd. The fowl is then held over the gourd and its back is broken with a *dao*. Its tongue is then pulled out for the *phavaw* and placed inside the gourd, after which the fowl is cooked, and when it is ready a little of its comb and liver, a little gravy, some salt, and some rice are placed in the gourd as *phavaw*. The sacrificer does not eat any of the *phavaw*. The meat is then eaten by the married couple. When all the meat has been eaten, the *phavaw* are thrown out through a hole in the floor."[65]

The Bwe of Burma make their main offering in July when the paddy is well started. They sacrifice one hog in a central spot of the village lands, first erecting a booth under an eugenia tree, which they consider sacred. Four elders act as priests, their functions being hereditary. Each man cuts three bamboos, one to represent a post of his paddy-bin and the other two of show the height he wants the grain to be in his bin. Then he makes a miniature bin, a long pen, a trap, and a snare. When the people assemble, only the most prosperous elders sit with the priests in the booth. No women are allowed to be present.

The leader takes a sprig from a eugenia tree and raises it in his clasped land to heaven and prays, the others doing likewise. The leader then spears the hog, and, when the blood flows, all seize their bamboos and cry out: "May my paddy be as high as these bamboos." Some declare that they have caught many rats in their traps and others that they have snared many wild fowls, in proof of their purpose to protect the growing grain. Others dance and shout, while some beat gongs or blow bamboo pipes.

The hog is then carried to the village to be cooked. Each man also provides a fowl. When all the food has been prepared, it is brought back to the booth; and, after a prayer much like that quoted above, they set out the food but eat none of it. On their way back to the village they dance and sing and spend the night in revelry. Next morning they return to the booth, and the priests begin to eat the food left there, all being allowed to partake; but anyone who considers himself unholy must not eat.

After the feast, when they have danced their way back to the village the chiefs draw two joints of water for each family and carry them into the village. The families are then called out on their verandahs and each family group, including the women and children, is sprinkled with water from one of the joints brought for it. The other is carried to the field next morning by the head of the family, and its contents are sprinkled on the grain. This rite is supposed to cleanse the families from evil and to produce good crops... In some village a bullock is substituted for the hog and in one of the Mopgha villages near Toungoo the inhabitants require a coal-black bullock, being willing to pay a large price in order to obtain one.[66]

Among the Sgaw the great sacrifice is ordered by the most influential chief of the country, his directions being given to those chiefs who are willing to acknowledge his superiority and by them in turn to their villages. The time being appointed, a suitable spot near a good stream is chosen to which every family is expected to bring a boar and a white fowl, while the chiefs each bring a bullock or a goat. An altar of bamboo with seven posts one each side is erected, the roof of which consists of seven tiers each smaller than the one below, like that of a Buddhist palace. Posts are set round to which the sacrificial creatures are tied. On the day named for the ceremonies a jar of liquor is placed at the foot of each post, and a young man is appointed by each chief to kill it after a prayer has been uttered by the great chief... The prayer is as follows: "O Lords of the land and water. O Lords of mercy. Lest the country should be stricken and the grain destroyed; lest the people should be distressed and pestilence come upon them, we put our sins on these buffaloes, oxen and goats. . . Let illness not come upon our people. . . From now on may our land be fruitful, may the work of our children prosper, may they keep well . . ."

The young men hamstring the animals and cut their throats as soon as the chiefs remove their hands. The blood is poured around the place of sacrifice. The gall-bladders are examined to see if they are full and well rounded. If so, the sacrifice is thought to be acceptable. . . The hair is burnt off of the animals. Their heads and feet are cut off and laid upon the altar, and seven water-joints are fastened to its posts. When the flesh is cooked the great chief goes to the altar, takes some rice and meat on a silver tray, fills all the bamboo-joints and puts some of the food down at various places on the altar. He then eats a morsel himself, after which each of the others eat in turn.[67]

While this ceremony is in progress, every one must confess his sins.

## NOTES

1. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 285 f.
2. J.G. Frazer, 1900, V, 2, 241 f.
3. At present the Khonds worship a male earth god, *Dharni Deo.*
4. *Meriah* is an Uriya word. The Khonds themselves call this sacrifice of theirs *toki* or *keddi.*
5. H.H. Risley (1891, article Pan) writes that the victims of the Khonds were with preference taken from a sub-section of the Ganda, the Patradia. The Patradia were considered as the descendants of the Pan (the Panka of Madhya Pradesh), who sold themselves as slaves or were bought by the Khonds as *meriah.* The Pans were not only the agents who bought children for the human sacrifices of the Khonds and more often robbed them for this purpose, but people sometimes sold their own children to the Khonds though they knew what fate awaited them. The sale of children as slaves was 200 years ago common in whole Bengal (*cf.* S. Turner, 1801, 26).
6. E.T. Dalton states (1872, 286) that Khond girls considered it a privilege if *meriah* youths wanted to have sexual intercourse with them.
7. Such marriages were welcomed because the children from such families were also victims and could be sacrificed once they had grown up.
8. According to S.C. Macpherson (1852, XIII, 11) these obscenities were

introduced by the goddess, and they could not be forbidden or restrained.

9. Among most tribes and Hindu castes, also among the Khonds, bride and groom are for the wedding anointed with turmeric.
10. Dalton says that the priest prayed to the earth-goddess for "full grain bins, increase of the number of children, of the number of cattle, pigs and fowls and for a decrease and disappearance of tigers and snakes". Each one of those assembled prays at the same time for what he specially desires. After that the officiating priest recites the history of the origin of the sacrifice and states the reason why it is performed. Dalton also records that the Khond said to the victim, "We have bought you for a price and not captured you. Now we sacrifice you according to our custom. No sin rests on us". This is succeeded by a long and often very touching, and often at the same time hot dialogue between priest and victim. The priest tries to explain to the *meriah* that he should gladly suffer all pain and even death since it was for the salvation of the whole mankind and that he had no cause to complain since he was bought for that purpose. The *meriah*, on the other hand, attempted to prove that he was cruelly deceived, that he had not voluntarily consented to his purchase, that he had been bought for work in the fields and that he had worked for his master. *Cf.*, E.T. Dalton, 1872, 287.
11. A village in the Khond area.
12. H.H. Risley notes that the elephant represented the earth-goddess herself, who was here conceived in elephant form. In the hill tracts of Ghunsur she was represented in peacock form, and the post to which the victim was bound bore the effigy of a peacock.
13. R.V. Russell and Hiralal (1916, III, 473) add that the buffalo is sacrificed once in four or five years. The animal is predestined for sacrifice from the birth, and is allowed to wander loose and graze on the crops at its will. At other places a lamb is sacrificed.
14. E. Thurston, 1909, III, 381-5.
15. V. Elwin, 1944 a, 54.
16. A low Hindu caste similar to the Pankas of Madhya Pradesh.
17. On p. 52 of the same article V. Elwin describes the killing of a buffalo which according to the assurance of the Khonds exactly conformed to the ritual of the former human sacrifice. "When everything was ready the Jani raised his axe (a *pharsa* battle-axe) and after making several passes over the buffalo struck it at the back of the neck. He gave two or three blows and then his son and another man came with their axes and struck it down to the ground. There followed an indescribable scene all the leading men present rushed at the animal with their knives and cut pieces from it. They cut off bits of the raw flesh and danced with it hanging from their lips. Their faces and hands were smeared with blood. Someone took up the head and carried it in procession round and round the booth followed by the drummers, then went quickly back to the village and put it in the chief

*Gunia*'s house. A number of men went off with bits of flesh, possibly to bury them in their fields".

18. C. Chakraberty (298 f.) does not mention his informants. But he obviously copied this passage from R.V. Russell, found in more detail in E. Thurston, 1912, 200 f.
19. The *Toomba* resembles the boy whom the Baiga master of ceremonies keeps as his assistant when he carries out the ceremonies of the *phulera*.
20. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 294.
21. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 294.
22. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 130.
23. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 147.
24. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 149.
25. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 176.
26. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 174.
27. *Desauli* probably is *Deswali* and means 'a stranger' or 'foreigner'. *Cf.* B. C. Mazumdar, 1927, 71.
28. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 196 f.
29. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 229.
30. S. C. Roy, 1915, 230-43; 1928, 227-9.
31. S.C. Roy, 1928, 47 f.
32. P. Dehon, 1909, 141.
33. S.C. Roy, 1928, 45.
34. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 268.
35. S.C. Roy, 1928, 39.
36. R.V. Russell, 1907, 64 f.
37. C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1945, 182 f.
38. C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1944, 11-28; 1945, 202-18; V. Elwin, 1943 a, 200.
39. R. Tagore (1920) gave poetical expression to this aversion in his drama "The Sacrifice".
40. *Cf.* H. von Glasenapp, 1922, 81 f; 1943, 181 f.
41. H. Oldenberg, 1923, 362.
42. T.K. Panikkar, 1929, 109.
43. S. Fuchs, 1950, 323-26.
44. A. Robertson, 1938, 68 f.
45. A. Robertson, 1938, 69.
46. Nirad, C. Chaudhuri, 1951, 63-72.
47. E. Thurston, 1909, I, 197.
48. E. Thurston, 1909, VII, 210.
49. F. Stegmiller, 1921-2, 413; 1924, 223-31.
50. F. Stegmiller, 1921-2, 423.
51. R. von Heine-Geldern, 1917, 12; C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1940, 160.
52. C. von Fürer -Haimendorf, 1940, 109 f.
53. E.A. Gait, 1898, III, 61 f.
54. J.P. Mills, 1937, 161.
55. J.P. Mills, 1922, 139.

56. One need not be surprised that volunteers frequently offered themselves for sacrifice. The belief in the survival after death is so strong among these people that they see nothing terrible in death and suffer it gladly if they can expect great profit for themselves and for their tribal fellows.
57. E.A. Gait, 1898, 58-9; S. Endle, 1911, 93 f.
58. H. Blochmann, 1873, 240; E.A. Gait, 1898, 56.
59. *Bhoge* means 'sacrificial dish'.
60. E.A. Gait, 1898, 63 f.
61. R. von Heine-Geldern, 1917, 39 f.
62. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 155.
63. R. von Heine-Geldern, 1917, 21.
64. N.E. Parry, 1932, 361-3.
65. N.E. Parry, 1932, 366.
66. H.J. Marshall, 1922, 237, f.
67. H.J. Marshall, 1922, 235 f.

## 9

# PARALLELS TO THE AŚVAMEDHA IN THE FUNERAL RITES OF THE ASIANS

THE sacrificial complex which we have so far studied expresses itself in various but fundamentally always similar ceremonies among the Palaeosiberian hunters, among the Central Asiatic shepherd nomads and among the agrarian peoples of Asia and Europe and the adjoining islands. But it gets still more confused and complicated by the fact that among many of these peoples and races this sacrificial complex is connected with another type of ritual, which is that of companion offerings for the dead. For also in these offerings the concept of a send-off and the conception of the victim as the "messenger" into the other world (of the gods and of the dead) are of essential importance. The intention of sending the victim in this case not to the gods but to the dead, or along with the dead, has resulted in the transfer of a number of elements of the former sacrificial complex to this new complex and in the assimilation of these elements in the funeral ceremonial of these races. The custom of sending along companion victims at the first, or a later final disposal of the dead is indeed especially often found among those peoples and cultures which also practise the sacrificial complex which we have so far described in the previous pages. In the following pages it will not be possible to give a full and complete account of such sacrifices all over the world, but we shall give at least a number of instances of this type of ritual among various racial and cultural groups and shall describe in a selective manner how this sacrificial complex is connected with the funeral rites.

## DEATH AND FUNERAL RITES IN VEDIC INDIA

Whoever notices that his last hour is near should, according to *Vaikh.* 5, 1 call his "fivefold" relatives, speak friendly with them at first, divide for himself the pleasures of this world and the things of the other world (*aihikaṃ saṃbhogaṃ pāralaukikaṃ cātmane vibhajet*), and when this day has arrived, should seat or lay himself upon a pure spot on sandy ground, and the Advaryu should whisper *mantras* into his ear. *Kāt.* 22, 6, 1 f. mentions a special sacrifice for a person wishing to die. If a child below two years dies, its body is buried, not burnt (p. 3, 10, 5; *Vaikh.* 5, 10). If its age is more than two years, all relatives should accompany it to the cemetery. If the deceased had already been under instruction, all the rites are performed beginning from the choice of the burial place till the bath for him as for an *āhitāgni*. The head of a family (*āhitāgni*) is cremated with fire supplied from the house, any other person silently with fire supplied by the village community. Kāt. 25, 7, 1 f. describes the dead ceremonies among the *prāyaścitta's* in connection with the case of a sacrificer dying at his sacrifice. The *mantras* are given in *Taitt. Ār.* VI, to which the commentary quotes the Viniyoga according to the ritual of Baudh, and of Bhāradvāja. A spot of ground is levelled (*Āśv. G.* 4, 1, 6 f.; *Ā. GP.* 3, 1 f.) in SE or SW which is sloping down towards south, south-east or south-west. It has the length of a man with outstretched arms, the breadth of a *vyāma* (5 cubics) and the depth of a *vitasti* (12 fingers). *Kauś.* 85 deals with the measurements in great detail. The burning place should be open at all sides, overgrown with many plants, but like the plot for the building of a house it should be free of thorns and milky plants. It should be a spot from which the water can flow off at all sides. The regulations which are given in *Āśv. Śr.* 6, 10 apply here also. All the hair of head, beard and body is cut and the nails are trimmed, then the deceased is anointed with *nard* ointment, and a crown of *nard* is set on his head. According to *Kauś.* 80, 19 pots are made, smeared with cowdung or filled with dry dung. Plenty of sacrificial grass and butter is held ready, and clarified butter (*sarpis*) is poured into sour milk. This is the "speckled butter for the manes" *pitrya pṛṣadājya* (*Āśv.*). Then the fires and the sacrificial vessels are brought to the place of cremation; after that the deceased is carried by elderly persons in odd numbers (either men or women, but not both sexes mixed); in accordance with the regulations of "some" authors (*cf. Kauś.* 80, 34; *Kāt.* 25, 7, 14) he should be brought on a cart drawn by cattle, with a seat on it (*Āśv.*) The animal to be cremated with it, follows the corpse. It is led with a rope tied to its left front leg. The victim is called *anustaraṇī* and is a cow or goat of one, or according to some, of black colour. If it is a cow, it should be hornless, old, vicious and sterile.[1] If the victim is not killed at the cremation because the deceased abhorred animal sacrifices, the animal is let loose. According to later ritual texts (*Bhārad. paddhati*) the figure of a cow made of *kuśa* grass could be used in place of the living animal.[2] In the funeral procession the mourners walk behind the corpse, elderly people ahead of the younger ones. Their skull locks have been opened, and their sacred thread, tied down. After the arrival at the cremation place the performer of the rites sprinkles with a *śamī* twig water on the spot, walking round it from right to left and reciting verse *ṚV*. 10, 14, 9 "go from here and sneak away". He places the *āhavanīya* fire in SW, of the cremation place. After that an expert erects a pyre between the fires, spreads sacrificial grass over it and a black antelope or goat skin with the hairs on the upper side. The deceased is carried north of the *gārhapatya* fire and laid on the pyre so that his head seems to lie near the *āhavanīya* fire. Now the sacrifice of the companion victim is performed. If the victim is not killed, but released, it is first led three times around the fire, the pyre and the corpse turning its left side to the corpse. After the recital of several *mantras* the animal is released. If the animal is to be killed, the performer of the rites says: "Place the animal in such a position that while lying its feet point southwards and its head westwards; kill it by closing its mouth". This is then carried out by the men.[3] Some *mantras* are recited in which the animal is addressed as the deceased's companion. After that the victim is cut up, the boneless pieces of the flesh are cooked, but the heart, the kidneys, the fat, the omentum, the tongue, the skin with the legs, the tail and the head are preserved.[4]

Then the deceased's wife is commanded to lie down at her husband's right side. The husband's brother or another Brahman, sometimes a pupil or an old servant of the deceased, takes after a while her left hand and tells her to rise. It is suggested by some community that the man should keep her as his wife.[5] The invocation *ṚV* 10, 18, 8 "Lift yourself to the world of the living" (which is despoiled of its original sense) is recited by the man.

If the deceased was a Kṣatriya, his bow is also deposited at the pyre. When the woman has risen the bow (with its string) is taken from the hand of the deceased (in the hand of a Brahman they place a staff, in that of a Vaisya a goading stick *Kauś*. 80, 48 f.), broken and thrown on the pyre. . . Then the sacrificial utensils of the deceased which he had in lifelong possession since the first lighting of the fire, such as *Juhū*, fire woods, mortar, pestle, etc., are laid in a certain prescribed manner (also *Ś. Sr. S.*) upon the body of the deceased; those with a hollow inside are filled with flecked butter. Gold coins are placed on the seven *prāṇāyatans* (nose, etc. *cf. Kāt*. 25, 7, 20). The son should take with himself the two grinding stones and also all objects of copper, brass or clay. Other communities, however, give different instructions (*Kāt*., 25, 7, 32 ff.). The omentum of the companion victim is cut out and used as a cover for the head and face of the deceased; the victim's heart is placed on the deceased's heart, etc.; the kidneys cut out from the still living victim are placed in the deceased's hands. After having thus placed the various organs of the animal on the corresponding places on the deceased's body, the performer of the rites covers the body with the victim's skin and, bending his left knee, he offers in the *dakṣina* fire gifts to *agni*, *kāma*, *loka*, *anumati* and finally he makes an offering on the chest of the deceased to *agni* who is now to be born out of the deceased as once the latter was born from *agni*. After that the order is given "Light the fire", which according to *Kauś*. 81, 33 should be done by the youngest. While the corpse is burning the verse *ṚV*. 10, 14, 7 is recited "Walk on ancient paths". North-East of Āhavānīya a knee-deep pit is dug and an *avakā*, a waterplant, is laid into it. This obviously is an old superstition and to explain which they quote a saying of *śruti* according to which the deceased leaves the pit and together with the smoke goes into the heavenly world, 89.

Then they recite *ṚV*. 10, 18, 3 "the living separated themselves from the dead" and, without once looking back, they walk away. According to *Kauś*. 82, 2 each one takes seven flints into his hand which he throws away one after the other on his return.

### The *Udakakarma*

At the return the *udakakarma*, a purification ceremony, takes place which *P*. has described in detail. I follow it. In prescribed form a kinsman or affine of the deceased is asked for permission to perform the ceremony. If the deceased had not reached the age of a hundred years, he grants the permission with the words: "Perform it, but not again in this manner", while in the other case he only says: "Perform it." All relatives within the seventh or tenth degree from fellow villagers who remember that they are related to the deceased in some manner should step into the water. They wear a single garment and the sacrificial thread over the right shoulder. With the ring-finger of the left hand they beat the water away and recite a verse of the *VS* intended to avert evil. They turn their faces to the south and dive under. A handful of water is poured away for the deceased: He is addressed by his personal name and told: "This is your water." *Āśv*. (4, 4, 10) prescribes to call the deceased by his personal and by his clan-name ("Devadatta, of the Kaśyapa *gotra*, this is your water"). They step out of the water, put on other garments according to *Āśv*. and wring out the former ones which are then laid with the hem pointing to the north. On a clean, grass-grown spot they sit down and themselves be entertained (by old tales) (*P*.). There they remain until the stars rise (*Ā*) and then go in procession to their homes, without turning round, the youngest walking ahead. At the door of their home they chew *picumanda* leaves, rinse their mouth, touch water, fire, cowdung (according to *Kauś*. 82, 20 they also breathe in the smoke of a certain kind of wood), white mustard and oil, step on a stone and enter (*P*.). Then the wife or the nearest relative of the deceased fills an earthenware vessel with water and lifts it on his head or left shoulder.

Turning his left side to the pyre, he (or she) walks three times around while one of the relatives with an axe or sharp stone cuts a hole in the jar from which the water spouts in a stream as he walks on. On completing the first circuit a second incision is made with the same axe or stone, and a second stream pours out simultaneously with the first. This is repeated before the third circuit begins.[6]

## Āśauca

There are various regulations concerning the time of impurity caused through a case of death in the family and the range of persons in the family affected by it (apart from the law books G. 14, 1 ff.; *Y* 3, 18 ff; *Manu V*, 84.65 etc.; see above 158) *Gṛhya's Āśv.* 4,4, 14 ff. and *P.* 3, 10, 38 ff. give us many details about them. In case of death of a child below two years of age its father and mother only are polluted for one to three nights otherwise three, and according to some, ten nights. Another regulation *P.* 3, 10, 38, perhaps interpolated, prescribes one or two fortnights. *Kauś.* 82, 42 speaks of "*Yamavrata*". For three days the relatives observe chastity and sleep on the ground. They eat food during the day only, and food which they have bought or received as a gift. They eat no meat (*P.* 3, 10, 26; *Āśv.* 4, 4, 15). In the first night after the death they offer a dumpling to the deceased, and pour before and after water for him "to wash himself" and call him three times by name. In the same night they expose in the open air milk in an earthen vessel and call the deceased: "*Preta*! Here bathe." During the whole time they should not read their "own reading". *Āśv.* 4, 4, 17 ff. prescribes that at the death of a *Mahāguru* (father, mother, and teacher) donations and study should cease for full twelve days, ten days at the death of *sapiṇḍa's*, eventually also at the death of a teacher who is no *sapiṇḍa*, of unmarried female relatives, etc. All traditional rites should according to *P.* be omitted, unless they are performed at the three fires and (according to some) at the heart fire; eventually they should be performed by others. We have to omit further details, also that of *Āśv.* 4, 6 at the death of a *guru* (*Cf.* Edwin W. Fay, *American Journal of Philology* XVI, p. 11) or of the *sāntikarman* to be performed at the loss "of children, livestock, gold" Comm.) on new moon day. It is described in great detail and is full of superstition.

### Saṃcayana

The *saṃcayana*, the collection of the bones of the cremated, takes place after the tenth day on an odd day of the dark half of the moon (consequently on the eleventh, thirteenth or fifteenth day), but sometimes already on the third or fourth day (*Caland, Todtenverehrung* 24; *Kauś.* 82, 26 and footnote; *Kāt.* 25, 8, 1 ff.). It must be performed under a constellation whose name occurs only once, consequently not under *Aṣāḍhā*, *Phalgunī* or *Proṣṭhapadā*, but *Kāt.* 31, 3, 3 explains the expression *ekanakṣatre* otherwise also. A male, undecorated vessel (According to the Comm. "without breasts") is used for the bones of a man, a female one (*i.e.* with breasts) for that of a woman (*Āśv.*). It is again here prescribed that elderly persons in odd numbers and of the same sex should perform the ceremony. The master of ceremonies (*kartā*) sprinkles with a *samī* twig water on the place which is mixed with milk, and walking three times from right to left around it he recites the verse *ṚV.* 10, 16, 14 "Though cool one, rich in coolness". According to *Kauś.* 82, 27 the water is mixed with milk for a Brāhmaṇa, for a Kṣatriya with honey. Each bone is lifted with thumb and ring finger and, without letting a sound be heard, it is deposited in the urn, the legs first, the skull last. After careful collection and cleaning of the bones the urn is placed in a pit while *ṚV.*, 10, 18, 10 "approach mother earth" is being recited. The pit has been dug in the same manner as the place of cremation and there is no access of water to it except rain water. Earth is poured into it, the urn shut with a cover and (according to the comm. to *Āśv.*) the pit is so far filled with earth that the urn is no more visible. According to *Kauś.* 82, 32 the urn is placed under the root of a tree. *Kāt.*, 25, 8, 7 allows the collection of the bones in an urn only in the case that a monument is to be erected, else they are at once put into a pit. Without looking backwards, they turn home, touch water and perform for the deceased a *śrāddha*, according to M. Müller (*India*, 235) based on Nārāyana "that which is given with *śraddhā* or faith", *i.e.* charity bestowed on deserving persons, and, more particularly, on Brāhmaṇas.

### Other Rites

The soul of the dead does not immediately go to the world of the manes, but remains for some time as a *preta*, separated from them (Caland, Ahnenkult 22; Oldenberg, Rel. D.V. 555). The *ekoddiṣṭaśrāddha* is performed for this single dead (*eka uddiṣṭo yasmin śrāddhe tad ekoddiṣṭam*); the *Navaśrāddha* and *pūrakapiṇḍa* during the days of pollution were appearently known only to the *Dharmas* and the later *Gṛhya* texts. The books of law relate, as can be seen from Caland and Jolly, in general more details than the *Gṛhyas* of which Ś. alone gives more exact prescriptions about the *ekodiṣṭa*. *Āśv.* 4, 5, 10; 7, 1 mentions it in passing; *P.* 3, 10, 51 ff. is not very explicit; but it mentions that let some offerings be made for the deceased during a whole year. *Ś.* 4, 2, 7 belongs to these several, but at another place (4, 3, 2, 3) it also reduces the time to three fortnights and even allows a happy event be the occasion for the *Sapiṇḍīkaraṇa*, *i.e.*, the conclusion of the *ekoddiṣṭa* offerings. Likewise Gobhila's *Śrāddhakalpa*, 3, 12 ff. (p. 1024). Caland has composed the prescriptions of *Dharma*. According to *Ś.*'s and *G.*'s words quoted above, a purification stalk, a jug of *arghya* water and a dumpling alone are necessary for this *ekoddiṣṭa*. Some ceremonies, on ordinary days performed as a matter of routine, are omitted on these days of mourning. Such ceremonies are, for instance, the invitation of the *pitirah*, of the *visvedeva* (*i.e.* the invitation of the Brahmans as their representative, and a meal for them. The usual fire offering is also omitted. Some other sacrificial formulae are chanted during the mourning time.

### The Sapiṇḍīkaraṇa

The *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa* is carried out either at the end of the year, or after three fortnights, or, as mentioned above, at the occurrence of a happy event. This means the admission of the deceased into the circle of the manes with whom he hence shares the usual *pārvaṇaśrāddha* the offerings of the dumplings. Since three *piṇḍas* only may be offered the oldest ancestor, the great-grandfather of the deceased, is from now on omitted in the series of the *sapiṇḍas* (*P.* 3, 10, 53; *Ś.* 4, 2, 8). *Ś.* gives this prescription at two places: 4, 3; 5, 9 so that doubts were expressed whether the text was genuine. Caland (Altind. Ahnenkult 162) believes that *Ś.* has borrowed its *ekoddiṣṭa* and *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa* rites from the Vājasanayins. The *Ś.* text conforms almost literally to the *G. Śrāddhakalpa* 3, 12 ff. (p. 1024). Four water pots are to be filled with sesame, sweet scents and water, three for the manes (great-grandfather, grandfather and father) and one for the deceased. He divides the content of this fourth jug with two verses, referring to the world of manes and of the living, among the first three jugs, and the same manipulation is performed with the last of the four *piṇḍas* to be prepared for this sacrifice, by dividing it among the other three. The same ceremony is performed in the *ekoddiṣṭa* for the deceased mother, brother or wife.

**Pitṛmedha (Kauś. 83 ff.; Kāt. 21, 3, 4; Taitt. Ār. 6, 6)**
According to the *Śat. Br.* 13, 8, 1 ff. the erection of a monument called *śmaśāna* for the deceased should not take place too quickly. *Kāt.* 21, 3, 1 says: "when the years of the deceased (or the year of death, the comm. are uncertain) are no more remembered" or if (in spite of a long stretch of time passed) they are still remembered, then in odd years. Keśava to Kauś. speaks of "after the passing of one year" or "within a year". The delay of these ceremonies should prevent, according to the *Śat. Br.*, to create "new evil" and is apparently based on the same superstition which finds its expression in the *ekoddiṣṭa* offering. The time for this "burial" of the dead is summer, autumn, or the month *Māgha* under a simple constellation or on new-moon. They provide as many pots as there are persons attending the ceremony, and an indefinite number of sun umbrellas (according to *Kauś.* also other utensils), fetch the bones (in the urn in which they were buried), place them on a bedstead, where they are covered with the corner of a cloth and are circled thrice each by the *Amātyas* (son, grandson, etc.) amidst the beating of a kettle-drum and the play of a lute and are "fanned" with the upper garments or fans. This latter service can be left to the women. The ceremony is performed in the first, middle or last part of the night. "Some" offer food to the dead; the day thus begun is called *viphalphānna*, "rich in dishes", (because, according to a comm., on this day much food is to be distributed) and is celebrated with dancing, singing and music. Early in the morning at dawn the bones are brought to the south and a monument is erected at a hidden spot on which, however, the rays of the midday sun shine. It is outside the range of sight from the village, away from the

road, and also far from Nyagrodha and other trees, and it should have various other qualities. Thus its background should be "*citra*" (*i.e.*, according to the comm., there should be some forest, mountains or temples) or at least water. One of the villagers carries high a bunch of grass which he holds up throughout the ceremony, and finally he puts it up at home. The spot is measured out, posts of certain wood or stone are stuck in the ground, encircled with a rope wound towards the left, and the place is swept clean. Along the rope stones are piled up (as in the *Agnicayana*), within furrows are drawn with a plough six-in-hand and herbs are sown in the furrows. The Adhvaryu throws the bones in the middle of the field, another person goes silently southwards at some distance and there throws the urn away. The bones are arranged limb for limb, bricks are laid in the middle and at the corners (or thirteen stones for one whom no fire altar had been erected), and the whole is covered with mud. The height of the mound may differ for Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiṣyas, or women, or it may have for all of them knee's height. In the south end of the monument two furrows are drawn and filled with milk and water, while seven are drawn at the north side and filled with water only. Each of the participants throws three stones into it and reciting *ṚV.*, 10, 55, 8 they walk over the furrows; then bathe, put on new clothes and proceed, holding the tail of a bull, towards the village. A clod of mud is laid down as the boundary sign between village and *Śmaśāna.* At home an offering is made in the *aupāsana* fire, the Adhvaryu recites a prayer for protection and throws a fire brand (according to some it is that of the deceased, according to others that of the performer) through any opening but the door. According to Harisvāmin the whole *aupāsana* fire is to be removed. Old objects are used as *dakṣiṇā*: an old chair with cushion, an old bull, old grains of barley. The Kalpa quotations in the community to *Taitt. Ār.* and the *Kauś.* differ in various points from this exposition which is based in the *Kāt.* and includes in the *Gṛhya* ritual in order to preserve the connection, without however to change essentially the whole picture. From the *Kauś.* many interesting details could be added; for instance, that a boat belongs to the utensils. After conclusion of the ceremony *Kauś.* requests that seven river currents (*nadīrūpāṇi*) are reproduced and filled with water, (Probably the participants) have to enter the boat furnished with gold and barley, while some *AV* verses are recited ("ascend to Savitri's ship" etc.). The first part of the function takes place in a hut erected in the village. The bones are dug up under the root of the tree where they had been deposited, with the words of the *AV*: "Give back, O lord of the forest!" The way for the living is in the N., "for the manes" in the S. of the hut. The banquet just referred to in *Kāt.* is described more precisely. The empty urn deposited in the middle of the hall is beaten with an old shoe. The women walk with loosened hair thrice around it, beating on their right thighs. At the conclusion of the ceremony they wipe out with a *Kūḍī* bunch the foot steps to the *śmaśāna* and with another one those to the ship, reciting *AV*. 12, 2, 30-36. Then they throw the bunch away towards SE. Still another point is worth mentioning which *Kauś.* prescribes on this occasion, but *Kāt.* 25, 8, 14 (amid the *prāyaścitta's*) *Sāṅkh. Śr*, 4, 15, 9 ff.; *Āp.* 9, 11, 23 at the *Saṃcayana* For if the buried bones have disappeared they take 360 *palāśa* stalks and with them lay out on a black skin the shape of a man (40 for his head, 10 for his neck, etc. *Śāṅkh.*) wrap them in wool, anoint them and then perform the ceremony of cremation. *Kauś.* knows of other expedients too. They take dust from the spot where the urn had been standing, or spread a garment at a river, Call NN! and take any living being setting on the cloth as substitute for the bones.[7]

## AMONG THE PRIMITIVE HUNTERS OF NORTH-EAST ASIA AND NORTH AMERICA

Already among the Gilyaks, Ainus and Olchas we find a peculiar connection between the bear cult and the funeral feast. Thus quite often a bear cub is raised in a cage in memory of a deceased relative and finally killed by strangulation on the occasion of a funeral feast, with the motive in mind of sending the bear as intermediary and carrier of sacrificial gifts to the "forestman" (*i.e.*, ancestor) into the other world[8]. Similarly eagles, foxes or other animals are thus used as messengers.

In the mythology of the Eskimos the dog plays an important part not only as the ancestor, respected husband of the ancestress, but to him are attributed also the functions of, at the one hand, guardian of the other world, in particular of the dwelling-place of the sea-woman, but on the other hand also that of the guide of the soul or travel companion of the dead. . . Thus relates Kroeber of the Smith-Sound-Eskimos that a dead man gets among other gifts also his favourite dogs along on his journey; they are strangled while in harness on the sledge to accompany the deceased. If a dead woman possessed a dog it is strangled to send it along with her[9]. . . H. Egede expresses the idea of having a dog as guide into the region of the other world most precisely by saying: "If a small child dies, a dog's head is placed at the side of its grave. Since small children have little sense it is believed that the dog will show them the way into the country of the dead and guide them."[10]

Among some Indian tribes of northern North-America such dog sacrifices are also customary. They resemble in their ritual strongly the bear sacrifice of the Ainus, Gilyaks and other Asiatic tribes.[11] Besides dogs, other animals too are raised as pets and at the death of their owner buried with him. This custom is probably connected with the so-called Nagualism or has evolved from it[12]. It is the belief in a mysterious link between an individual man and a certain animal on which the man's life depends. This animal then assumes the function of a guardian spirit of that particular man. That man's life depends on the well-being of the animal. If it dies that man also dies. And vice versa, the man's guardian spirit who is incorporated in his pet animal is sent after him into the other world.[13] This form of an individual totemism is widespread among the Red-Indians as far as South California: Among the Shoshones an eagle raised in a cage is ritually killed by pressing its lungs together—in connection with competitive fights of the shamans—on the occasion of a funeral feast for a deceased chief. Before the eagle is killed the Shoshones hold a dance with the eagle in hand. The dead eagle receives messages for the spirits of the other world, it is mourned and its body is covered with sacrificial gifts. Later the eagle is skinned and the body buried at the grave of the dead chief or in the dancing hall.[14]

## AMONG THE INNER-ASIATIC NOMADIC ANIMAL BREEDERS

The belief in a special guardian spirit for each man is wide-spread also among the Inner-Asiatic nomadic animal breeders. It is also believed that this spirit who shares the fate of his client also appears in animal form, as a pig, for instance, or as a black cat, or dog.[15] But it is not usual among these tribes to keep pets as guardian spirits.

But animals, especially horses and reindeer, are killed at the funeral feast to send them after the deceased into the other world. This killing is often done in the manner of a sacrifice which we know from the rites described previously. In old times human sacrifices of this type were not seldom.

Marco Polo already relates that the Tatar performed human and animal sacrifices at the death of their great *khans* and princes. The dead of the clans of Jingis-khan were removed to a high mountain in the Altai, in accordance with an old and unalterable usage, and even if the distance was more than hundred days' journey. "But woe to him who meets the funeral procession, for the leaders of the procession slaughtered without mercy everybody", saying: "Go into the other world and serve there your dear lord." For they have the belief that all those killed in this manner will at once enter the service of the deceased. And that the dead may not lack in riding animals they slaughter the best horses in the stables of the great *khan*. As Manju was carried to the Altai, over ten thousand men and innumerable horses fell victim to this terrible illusion.[16]

Among the Ostyaks at the Kazym the reindeer is killed at the grave of a deceased which he used to drive and which was named after him. All the bones of the sacrificial animal are collected and laid into the partly filled grave on the skin which covers the earth put over the corpse. Even the head with the antlers is left on the skin and thus goes along into the grave; according to another information the head with the antlers is separated from the skin, but placed on the grave.[17]

The Yakuts also have, or at least had in the past, a horse sacrifice at the funeral of a deceased member of the tribe. A report in the beginning of the eighteenth century states that the Yakuts exposed their dead wrapped in bullock or horse skins on a wooden structure. This consists either of two forked trees the tops of which were cut off and in the branches of which the coffin was placed, or of four trees which were connected by poles to serve as a platform for the coffin, or a platform for the coffin was erected on four posts stuck into the ground.[18] In former times they sacrificed servants and women at the death of important persons. The horse, in full harness, was laid into the grave with its master, while its skin with the head was hung up over the grave.

The Buriats too sacrificed horses at their funeral feasts. "The Buriats usually burn their dead; occasionally, however, there is what is called a 'Russian burial', that is, the body is placed in a coffin and the coffin is put in the ground. But generally if a man dies in autumn or winter his body is placed on a sledge and driven by the horse which he valued most to some secluded place in the forest. There a sort of house is built of fallen trees and boughs, the body is placed inside the house, and the building is then surrounded with two or three walls of logs so that no wolf or other animal can get into it."[19] The horse is afterwards slain. "If other persons die during the winter their bodies are carried to the same house. In this lonely silent place in the forest they rest through the days and nights until the first cuckoo calls, about the ninth of May. Then relatives and friends assemble, and without opening the house burn it to the ground. Persons who die afterwards and during the summer months are carried to the forest, placed on a funeral pyre and burnt immediately. The horse is killed just as in the first instance."[20]

The Teleuts slaughter on the seventh day of a man's death his favourite horse so that he may be able to use it in the other world. The horse is brought home already on the day of death and covered with precious clothes and covers and silken tapes are tied into its mane and tail. At the funeral procession it is harnessed to the sledge or cart of the deceased. For seven days the horse stands harnessed and covered with the precious covers and is well fed; it is even led to the houses of the relatives and of the neighbours where each one gives it some oats and to the man leading it around tea and liquor. Then the horse is slaughtered, while saddle and covers are donated to the poor. At times the horse itself is given away; but even in this case the belief is entertained that the deceased somehow gets into its possession.[21]

Among the many forms of funeral sacrifices there is in particular one which must interest us here: the wedding with the deceased. As in former times the widow followed with the horse and other animals her deceased husband into death, thus a deceased bachelor was given a woman along who was wedded to him at the grave. But often the female slave who was for or with the true wife sent into death with a married man first was married to him. The Arab Ibn Fadhlan describes such a wedding with a deceased which he observed at the Russian funeral about the year 921.[22]

The girl who had declared her readiness to die with her master was guarded by two other girls who took care of her and even washed her feet. Everything was prepared for the funeral, and also for the wedding. The dead man whose body was preserved by the cold was dressed and he was served food and alcoholic drinks. A dog was killed and parts of its body thrown into the boat in which the deceased had been placed. The corpse also was given all his weapons at his side. Then his horses were chased till they dripped of perspiration, when they were cut into pieces with swords and the parts of their bodies also thrown into the boat. At last a cock was brought and likewise killed.

Then the girl to die had sexual intercourse with a man. On the day of the sacrifice she was led to a structure which resembled the overhanging eaves of a door. She placed her feet on the flat palms of some men, was lifted up by them and, looking down on the eaves, said something in her own language. Then the men put her down on the ground. This ceremony was twice repeated. At last the girl was offered a hen. She cut off its head and threw it away. The body was thrown on the boat. Then the girl took off her ornaments. She was lifted on the boat, but showed reluctance to enter the tent. But now men came with shields and sticks who offered her an intoxicant. As the girl was still reluctant to enter the tent she was shoved into it by an old woman. Then six men entered the tent and had sexual intercourse with the girl. Then they laid her at the side of the corpse. The old woman put a rope around her neck which two men pulled while the old woman stabbed her with a knife between the ribs. Then fire was put to the boat and the deceased with his bride and all his property burnt.

O. Schrader made a comparative study of northern and north-European wedding rites and discovered that the rites which preceded and accompanied the sacrifice of the girl were very ancient wedding rites: the washing of the girl's feet is an old Indo-German custom of the bridal bath. The lifting of the girl over the door sill resembles the wedding rite common to many German, Finn and Slawic tribes of bodily lifting the bride over the door sill of her new home. The men around the girl represent the bridesmen. The sexual intercourse of the six men with the girl has its parallel in the well-known bride's night. The reluctance of the girl to enter the tent and her forcible lay-out at the side of the dead man is a pretended or sincere reluctance of the bride to enter the bridal room. There is even the custom that the bride is forcibly thrown on the bridal bed by the bridesmen. More trivial customs were also performed as the report stated: the distribution of gifts by the girl, her singing of partly merry and partly sad songs, the sacrifice of a cock and a hen—all these rites were customary in the ancient wedding ritual of the East-European peoples. The report leaves no doubt that Ibn Fadhlan has described a bloody wedding rite with a deceased.

It is at once clear why we find in this wedding rite with a deceased a parallel to the *aśvamedha* of the Vedic Aryans, the *laru kaj* of the Baigas and Gonds and the human sacrifices in Orissa and Assam. The *laru kaj* is moreover expressly called "the wedding of the pig". Whether the *meriah* of the Khonds and similar sacrifices were also conceived as weddings, is not stated, but the anointment of the victim with turmeric in the *meriah* would suggest it, because bride and bridegroom are anointed with turmeric before their wedding. Moreover, the victim is granted great liberty for sexual play before the sacrifice takes place.

Such weddings with the dead seem to have been the custom among several peoples who also practised the horse sacrifice and perhaps also the human sacrifice as in the *naramedha* of the Vedic Indians and the *meriah* of the Khonds. According to Masaudi (from the year 940) the Russians and Slavs practised widow sacrifice and wedding with the dead side by side. But in later times this custom seems to have died out. A symbolic form of a wedding rite with a deceased bachelor or unmarried girl was in early times practised by the Tatars, the peoples of China, and sporadically also in other parts of the world.[23]

## AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE CAUCASUS AND ANCIENT EUROPE

Among several Caucasian peoples the dedication and the sacrifice of horses are connected with the funeral rite. The horse is actually or symbolically sacrificed to serve the deceased in the other world. The dedication of the horse takes place either already at the funeral or later at a succeeding memorial feast. R. Bleichsteiner has published a good study on this ceremony which is here followed to a large extent.

Among the Ossetes the following ceremonies were performed: "It is the sacred duty of the relations mourning a deceased to facilitate the entrance of the deceased into paradise and to provide him with all what he needs. He is dressed in his best attire and then brought to the cemetery. . . There his widow cuts off her pigtail (a hair sacrifice as a substitute for a former human sacrifice ?) and places it on the chest of the deceased . . . An old . . . man . . . recites the text of the dedication of the horse, then he walks with three relatives three times around the coffin. The widow takes her pigtail and says: "This is a whip for the dead." The man whips the horse thrice with the pigtail and says: "You both are dedicated to the one." Then he takes some kind of bread and a bottle of *arak* as fare on the journey into the other world for the dead, throws the bread away and breaks the bottle, on a stone . . . Then the corpse is buried . . . That the deceased might recognise his horse in the other world, the master of ceremonies cuts off a tip of its ear or at least makes a cut in the ear. Then one of the men present mounts the horse and chases it so long till it is quite exhausted".[24]

At the subsequent memorial feast for the deceased there is a horse race over a large distance; it is followed by a competitive shooting match. The victorious horse was probably dedicated to be sacrificed for the deceased. Then a festive banquet is held with a drinking bout.

The Cherkesses too had similar customs. Interesting is an ancient report from the fifteenth century which states that at the death of a Cherkess nobleman a high wooden platform was erected in an open field. The body was set on it after the intestines had been removed. From a hollowed tree a coffin was prepared which besides the corpse could contain a part of the funeral gifts. At the side of this structure a virgin girl was deflorated on the skin of a bullock just killed.

The funeral rites of the Abchas do not differ in any essential part from that of the Cherkesses. But it should be mentioned in this connection that the Abchas practised in former times the tree burial. A Theatine missionary of the year 1654 relates the following:

> They do not bury their dead, but hang them in the tops of trees in the following manner: they hollow a tree in the form of a coffin, put the body in and fasten it with strong wine tendrils in the tree. On the tree in which the coffin is hanging they hang up the dead man's weapons which served him in life, and they send his horse which he rode into death after its master that, as they say, it may serve him as well in the other world as in this one. They decorate the horse with silken threads and chase it on the field where the master is exposed until it breaks down dead from exhaustion.[25]

What we know of the funeral rites and of the conceptions of the Chechens about the other world shows complete conformity with that of the Ossetes. They are also said to give orders to the dying which they should take along into the other world or they inquire from them about the conditions in which the other deceased find themselves.

It is also noteworthy that the Chechens as also the Ossetes had originally funeral houses for the individual clan groups.

Among the Georgian mountain tribes of the Chewsurs, Phshaws and Thushs in the north-east of the Soviet Republic Grusia the dedication and racing of horses are equally popular. In all probability the Georgians have adopted this custom from their neighbour tribe, the Ingushs whom they call Khist. . . In Chewsuria at the other side the existence of old funeral houses is still known at some places, but the present population is ignorant of their age and use. In these houses the dead were placed along the walls on benches of slabs of slate. The Thushs too seem to have had such funeral houses. As probably in the case of the Ossetes and Chechens, these tribes also had funeral places for the individual clan groups.

The Chewsurs believe that the deceased cannot get along in the other world without a horse. For this reason the horse of a deceased is placed near the bier. The mane of the horse is decorated; on the forehead it wears pearls of glass and an embroidered decoration in the form of a triangle . . . The priest dedicates the horse to the deceased. He sprinkles *arak* on mane and saddle and gives the animal three light slaps with the whip. When the corpse is carried to the graveyard the widow leads the horse and ties the reins to the hand of the dead husband. The horse is then donated to one of the nearest relatives.

As to the horse races the reports do not agree. It seems that they are performed on the day of the funeral, but before the burial takes place, if the death falls into the opportune season, while in winter these races necessarily are postponed until the memorial feasts take place . . . All horses are led thrice around the dead man. Into the plaited mane of the horse is tied a red cloth with fringes and around the belly is laid a woven belt.

The memorial feasts are the following:

1. The memorial feast which includes the funeral banquet and the accompanying customs of "holding the mouth" (prohibition to speak for certain persons).
2. The light-mass. The memorial feast demands a high expenditure for food and drinks. It is necessary to slaughter some animals. On this day horse races are held frequently.
3. The end of the year, or "the shaking off of the clothes". This last mentioned name derives its origin from the custom that the clothes of the deceased are on this day donated to the affinal relatives or to other near relatives. After the year is over the nearest relatives may again shave their hair and beard.
4. The *chalarjoba*. It consists of a banquet and a visit to the grave.
5. The meeting of the souls. It is believed that on this day the souls of the dead return to their former homes and for this reason the surviving relatives celebrate

> a big feast in their honour, brew beer and bake various cakes, in particular the round Sathophe which serves as target in the competitive shooting.

The Phshaws celebrate similar funeral rites. After the funeral a bed of mourning memorial is erected in the house of the deceased. His clothing is laid out on the bed or an elevated board and *arak* or wine, water and bread, nuts and hazel nuts and various cakes are placed at its side. Every third day the dishes and drinks are changed. All this is done through the year. The memorial feasts resemble closely those of the Chewsurs.

The funeral rites of the Thushs, Swans and Mingrelians are similar. Among the Swans sexual orgies on the occasion of the funeral feast take place; obviously they belong to the ceremonial and are not simply the consequences of heavy drinking.

The many Kurgans of the south-Russian steppes are proofs of the importance which the horse sacrifice plays in the funeral rites of the Skythians, the distant ancestors of the present-day Ossetes. Horse skeletons have often in great numbers been found in these Kurgans. These graves often contain also large quantities of weapons, vessels, utensils which were buried along with the dead; almost everywhere we find also the remains of sacrificed horses; in the most imposing mounds even human victims can be found. . .

The grave gifts in these mounds confirm exactly what Herodotus (IV, 71) relates about the death customs of the Skythian princes. The corpse was carried around in the country on a hearse; at whatever place it arrived, the people shaved their hair, cut off pieces of the ear, wounded face and arms and pierced their left hands with an arrow. The Ossetes and other Caucasian tribes also wounded themselves in mourning. Even ordinary people among the Skythians were carried around on hearses by their relatives and friends. This lasted forty days. But for the kings they erected a house of wood with a roof of willow twigs, strangled one of their wives, some servants and horses, added precious gifts and then erected a mound. At the annual memorial feast they sacrificed fifty servants and fifty horses, stuffed the latter with husk and put them on structures around the grave, after the human victims had been killed and been mounted on these horses.[26]

Herodotus states that the Thracians expose the body of a deceased for three days. The dead is mourned and honoured by a funeral banquet after which he is cremated or buried. When the grave has been filled up competitive games are held. The Thracians send every fifth year a "messenger" to the dead with orders; he is killed with spears thrown at him.[27]

Not infrequently the horse of the Slavs appears as a funeral gift. At their funeral feasts banquets and masked dances were customary and some times much liquor was consumed.[28] But it is possible that the horse cult of the Slavs had been borrowed from the Germans.[29]

Also in the Germanic north the horse is everywhere the most important funeral gift. It is placed, with other gifts such as cocks, dogs and sometimes human beings, with the dead on a boat or it is cremated with the dead, like the horse of Balder.[30] The famous royal graves which were discovered in the last fifty years at Kristiana fjord all contained horses.[31]

The Celts, however, preferred pigs to horses as funeral gifts.

## AMONG SOUTH-INDIAN JUNGLE TRIBES

The funeral rites of certain South Indian jungle tribes seem to be similar to those just described in the previous pages. This is in particular true of the ritual which the Todas of the Nilgiri Hills perform in their funerals. These death ceremonies may extend over several months. The rites are divided into two main sections: which are such performed soon after death, and others which may take place at a later date.

The funeral ceremonies of the Todas are performed in all publicity and may be attended also by strangers. They are performed for each clan at a specific place, either in the vicinity of villages or at places which apparently were never inhabited, or in desolated villages. Each clan has at least two such places for the disposal of the dead, one for men and another for women. But frequently they have more than two.

It is the custom to build at the place of funeral a special hut for the temporary reception of the corpse, mostly within a stone circle which exists from former funerals. For male bodies this hut may be used repeatedly, especially if one death follows closely another one. But once the hut has been used for a woman, it is always immediately after use burnt down. A further stone circle is erected at the side of the hut which houses the body. This stone circle will hold the buffaloes kept for the sacrifice.

Soon after death, the body of the deceased Toda is brought into the dairy of his family, and then on a certain day is carried on a wooden bier to the place of funeral. Soon after the carriers have left the dairy they put the bier on the ground and pour thrice buffalo milk into the mouth of the deceased. On the place of funeral and sometimes already on the way to it, earth from the entrance into a buffalo enclosure is dug up and thrown on the corpse and into the enclosure.

The funeral guests meet at the funeral place, greet the corpse which is then placed in the hut. According to a letter of the missionary Finicio, addressed to the Vice-Provincial of Calicut (1 April, 1603) the body was formerly wrapped in a cloth of pure silk. If such a cloth could not be procured the funeral had to be postponed. In order to preserve the body in such a case from decomposition, it was cut open at the side and the intestines removed. The back of the skull was also opened and the brain removed; then the body was placed in a shed and dry-smoked.

In the vicinity of the hut a square was cleaned and a rectangular and about three feet high pyre was built up. For a male body they then dug up some earth from the entrance into a buffalo enclosure and threw it on the corpse. If the deceased was a woman they placed leaves under her right arm pit.

Then the buffaloes chosen to die in sacrifice—always buffalo cows because they have to serve the dead with their milk in the other world—are roped in and killed. Before they are caught they are chased around for some time and brought into a rage. Finally they are caught by their horns; two men hang on to the neck of the animals while the others shower blows on them with their clubs. Then they tied a bell around the neck of each, and the chasing begins once more. All sacrificial animals are anointed with butter at the back, head and horns.

The victims are killed with a blow at the head with the blunt end of the axe. As soon as the buffalo falls—which usually happens after the very first blow—the corpse of the deceased is brought near and laid down at the head of the dead buffalo. The covering over the corpse is taken off and the right hand of the deceased laid around one horn. A female body is laid in such a position that her feet touch the buffalo's mouth; according to some informers the feet are in fact put into the mouth of the buffalo.[32]

Then mourning begins. The individual relatives address first the buffalo and then the dead whose funeral they have come to attend. But Rivers could not make sure whether the mourning was held for the buffalo or the deceased.

During the singing of dirges each one of the relatives gives clothes to affinal relatives of the deceased. The women of the receiving families place these clothes on the corpse. The donors consequently henceforth belong to the clan of the deceased.

After that the corpse is placed on the bier and carried to the pyre. The pyre is lighted and butter poured on it; the corpse is then lifted up and thrice swung over the pyre as long as the fire is still burning low. Then the bier is once placed on the ground and all valuable goods are stripped from the corpse. Rivers is of the opinion that the thrice swinging of the body over the fire signifies a symbolic cremation of the body; after this ceremony the valuable goods can be taken from the body without fear of revenge from the community of the dead. Finally one near relative cuts off a lock from the head of the deceased; it is preserved as a relic for the second funeral. Only then the corpse is put on the pyre and cremated. In former times the Todas were alleged to have been laid out with their face downwards, but this is not done anymore in present time.[33]

During the day members of the Kota tribe arrive and while some of them make music during the cremation ceremonies, the other take the flesh of the sacrificed buffalo, cut it in pieces and stick them on sticks and carry them off.

When the corpse has been completely burnt, a piece from the skull is extracted from the ashes and with the previously cut off hair-lock placed between two pieces of bark; the whole is then wrapped into a cloth and preserved. These relics are carried into another village or a special hut is erected for them.

The kinsmen of the deceased have to observe certain taboos during the time until the second burial. The relics of the dead are greeted during this interval by all those Todas who had missed the first funeral.

The so-called second funeral[34] usually takes place within a year's time. Formerly such a funeral feast was a grand affair and lasted two full days, often into the morning of the third day. Many buffaloes were sacrificed; on the first day they were chased around and captured; on the second day they were driven to the place of sacrifice and slaughtered. In present time the whole ceremony is over in one day, since government has prohibited the slaughter of more than two buffaloes. Sometimes such a funeral feast is held for several dead at one time; in such cases more than two animals may be killed in sacrifice.

For the second funeral the relics of the deceased are placed in a hut specially erected for the purpose. At a celebration which E. Thurston attended the relics were placed in a cave near the trunk of a tree. From this place they were brought on a bamboo bier to the festive place and put on the ground at the entrance into a buffalo enclosure. Then earth is thrown into the enclosure and also on the relics of the deceased. Then the buffaloes selected for the sacrifice are chased around and finally captured and killed as in the first funeral. After that the relics of the deceased are brought and placed at the head of each buffalo. Then mourning songs are sung, exactly as at the first funeral. In case of a male deceased, the men perform a dance after the killing of the buffaloes, while one of the men carries a long pole.

After that a banquet is held; when it is finished most of the attending guests depart. The nearest relatives however remain back, almost continuously singing dirges. At the side of the hut in which the relics of the deceased had been deposited there was from former times already a small stone enclosure. At the entrance of the enclosure a pit had been dug. The relics of the deceased are now carried out of the hut, as well as the other objects to be burnt with the bones. The whole lot is placed near the pit on the ground. Then a fire is lit and clarified butter (*ghi*) poured into it. The relics of the deceased are unwrapped, the enclosing bark wrappings thrown away, the skull bones and the hair lock anointed with butter, the hair lock placed between the skull bones and the whole tied together with a string and again wrapped in a cloth. Then the attending relatives bow low before the relics and touch them with their foreheads.

Within the stone circle a fire is now lit and the relics deposited on the wood. Then burning faggots are brought as also the objects to be burnt with the relics: foodstuff, money, wooden sticks, a club, the long pole used in the dance of the men, bamboo vessels, a basket, a bow with three arrows, a knife, an axe, a sieve and a palm-leaf umbrella.

If the deceased was a male his near relative decorates himself with a woman's ornaments and takes his stand at the entrance of the stone enclosure. The man who lit the fire now faces him and both start mourning songs. If the deceased had been a woman, two women begin to sing the dirges. Then they enter the enclosure and put a pounder into the fire. After that they take off their ornaments.

Water is poured on the fire to extinguish it. Whatever is left unburnt the Kota musicians may take away. The ashes are swept into the pit and the pit is shut with a stone slab.

Now a kinsman of the deceased arrives with a bell. Ringing the bell he walks thrice around the place of the funeral. Then he takes a new pot, lifts it high over the head and smashes it on the stone slab covering the ashes. Then he bows low and touched the stone slab with his forehead. He rises and without ever looking back walks away.

After that all go to the hut where the relics of the deceased had been resting. There a banquet is served. Then all mourners cut off a lock of their hair and return home.[35]

The Badagas, another tribe in the vicinity, also cremate their dead. The cremation takes place after all the relatives have arrived. The corpse is laid on a bedstead. Then two or three buffaloes are let loose and chased around. At last one is caught and led thrice around the corpse. Some milk is milked from the buffalo and poured into the mouth of the deceased. Then the corpse is deposited on the funeral cart which is built up in several layers and artistically decorated. The corpse, newly dressed and surrounded by all funeral gifts is saluted by all mourners. Then they perform a dance around the cart.

Finally the cart is led away. But half-way to the cremation place they stop, take the corpse from the cart, take off all the trappings of the cart, dismantle the cart itself and hack it into pieces. The widow takes off her ornaments and she and the sisters of the deceased cut off a lock from their hair and tie it into the clothes of the corpse. Then an old man recites the confession of sins for the deceased. The sins of the deceased are transferred on a buffalo calf which is then released. It cannot be sold anymore, but is considered a sacred animal. Finally the body is cremated.

The next day they collect the bones yet unburnt and place them on a mat. The younger funeral guests salute them and carry them to the bone pit which is found in every village. Then the affines of the deceased who already before in a special ceremony had thrown rice grains into the face of the deceased are shaved and shorn.

The clan of Udaya does not perform the custom of the Badagas of leading the buffalo around the corpse. Instead they bring a bull and a young cow, hang clothes and ornaments on them and wrap their necks with wedding thread. Offerings are performed in front of them and flowers thrown at them. Then their tails are placed into the hand of the deceased. After that the confession of sins takes place.

The Udayas bury their dead in a squatting position and prefer a grave in which previously some other dead had been buried.[36]

A comparison of the funeral ritual of the Badagas with that of the Todas discloses at once the many conformities in the actual cremation ritual, but not in the second funeral which is lacking in the Badaga ritual. But we may safely assume that the Badagas had known and practised such a second funeral and even used to erect menhirs. In the vicinity of the village Bethalhada stand even today a row of such cromlechs, with the carved figures of men and animals, etc., encircled by a stone enclosure. The Badagas maintain that their ancestors had erected those stones and they still perform periodical sacrifices in their honour. It appears that the Badagas in general prefer for their cult places the neighbourhood of these cromlechs. The erection of these cromlechs must have been connected with rites which today are forgotten but which perhaps survive in the funeral rites of the more conservative Todas.

At one place the legend relates that a cromlech was erected for a Badaga who had been killed in a fight with a tiger. Annual sacrifices are performed there: a Kurumba makes fire by friction, burns incense and sprinkles water on numerous goats which are destined for the sacrifice. But only those goats are sacrificed which shake themselves when sprinkled. At another spot a menhir was erected for a man-eating tiger. It had been killed by a Badaga.[37]

The Uralis, a jungle tribe of Coimbatore in South-India, are perhaps related to the Badagas and obviously have copied their funeral rites from them. They bury their dead. As soon as a member of the tribe dies, the corpse is anointed, washed, and dressed in new clothes and turban. Three silver coins are stuck on the face, a rupee on the forehead, and a quarter rupee on each temple. When all have assembled for the funeral, the corpse is brought out and placed under a cart of six storeys (*teru*), erected of bamboo and sticks, covered with gaudily coloured cloth and flags. On top they place a brass vessel (*kalasa*) and an umbrella. To the accompaniment of a band the Uralis dance around the cart, and the procession then moves on to the burial-ground, where a buffalo cow is brought, a little milk extracted from her and poured into the mouth of the corpse. A cow and one or two calves are driven around the cart, and the calves presented to the sister of the deceased. The cart is then broken into pieces, after its decorations had been stripped off. The body is buried either on the spot, or taken away to distant *nīrgundi*, and buried there. On the eighth day after the funeral or return from *nīrgundi*, the eldest son of the deceased has his head shaved, and, together with his brother's wife, fasts. If the funeral has been at *nīrgundi*, the son, accompanied by his relatives, proceeds there after tying some cooked rice in a cloth. On arrival, he offers this rice to all the memorial stones in the burial ground (*goppa-mane*), and erects a stone, which he has brought with him, in memory of the deceased. He then anoints all the stones with *ghī*, which is contained in a green bamboo measure. He collects the rice, which has been offered, and one of the party becoming inspired, gives vent to oracular declarations as to the season's prospects, the future of the bereaved family, etc. The collected rice is regarded as sacred, and is partaken of by all. Each sept has its own *goppa-mane*, which is a rectangular space with mud walls on three sides. In cases in which the corpse has been buried close to the village, the grave is marked by a file of stones. Two or three years afterwards, the body is exhumed, and the bones are collected, and placed in front of the house of the deceased. All the relatives assemble and weep, and the son conveys the bones to *nīrgundi* where he buries them. On the eighth day he revisits the spot, and erects a stone with the ceremony already described.[38]

The funeral rites of the South-Indian tribes, in particular those of the Todas, show impressive parallels with the funeral feasts of the Inner-Asiatic nomadic animal breeders. The companion sacrifice is in the case of the nomadic animal breeders that of a horse or reindeer, in the case of the South-Indian tribes, in accordance to their peculiar economy that of a buffalo. This animal is sent along with the dead as a companion to make life in the other world easier. It is also remarkable that at least in one clan of the Badagas a bull and a cow are decorated as in a wedding and then venerated. In other clans of this tribe a buffalo cow and a calf (as scape goats!) play an important part. But these animals are no more sacrificed, but only given away. In ancient times they were undoubtedly sacrificed or driven out to perish.[39]

## THE *SIDOLI* FEAST OF THE KORKUS

The funeral rites of a great number of the Central Indian hill-tribes are known to us only in vague details. But in one tribe at least whose funeral rites are known in detail, we find a strong mixture with rites which are familiar to us from the study of the *laru kaj*. The tribe is that of the Korkus, the westernmost Munda tribe. The habitats of the Korkus are the hills and valleys of the middle Satpura range in western Madhya Pradesh and in Berar. Their number is a little less than two lakhs. Probably because they inhabit the more inaccessible, hilly and forested areas of Central India, they have at least partly preserved not only their original language, but also many of their original customs and usages.

In the following pages the detailed account of the *sidoli* funeral feast of the Korkus shall be given as described by W. Koppers[40].

About a year, or even several years after the death of a Korku, as soon as the family finances permit the celebration of such an expensive feast is arranged and with this the spirit of the deceased is finally set at rest. This is done through the celebration of the *sidoli* feast. The *sidoli* is performed for every deceased Korku, man, woman or child; but since the relatives cannot afford the high expenses for the celebration of such a feast frequently, the *sidoli* is performed usually for several deceased relatives at the same time, for those namely, who had died since the last *sidoli* had been performed by the family. It is but natural that this feast is celebrated mainly when an influential and wealthy man has died, rarer, when an old woman has died. But when the feast takes place the less important relatives of the family or kinship group are included in the feast and they too are laid at rest.[41] Excluded from the *sidoli* are, however, such persons who have died an abnormal death, either by lightning, snake bite, suicide, etc. Strictly excluded is the spirit of a woman who has died in childbirth. She is buried outside the village boundaries, at an isolated and anxiously avoided spot, and five thorns are driven through her foot soles to prevent her spirit from returning to the village. Such a case happened in 1940, while I was in the village.

The *sidoli* is organised by a kinship group (*kuthumb*), and for its celebration all relatives and clansmen are invited as the chief guests. The main organiser of the feast is of course the man who pays the considerable expenses of the feast. Usually it is the nearest male relative of a wealthy and influential deceased Korku whose spirit, mainly, is to be set at rest. For the dances and the other more public ceremonies of the feast, not only the fellow villagers, but also people from other villages are most welcome. These guests, however, take only in exceptional cases part in the festive meals which are given on the occasion of the *sidoli* feast. Usually only relatives and eventually the clansmen are invited for the banquet.

As stated before, the purpose of this feast is to secure the eternal peace of the deceased's spirit. This is achieved by the final burial of the symbolically reproduced remains of the dead in a rite which in many points conforms to the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baigas, and in the erection of a memorial stone or structure, the so-called *munda*, resp. *mando*.

The erection of a *munda* is, however, not essential for the celebration of a *Sidoli*. Some Korku clans omit the erection of a memorial, while they perform all the other rites. Essential however for the celebration of the *sidoli* feast is the performance of the so-called *phul*, a rite which may not be omitted for any deceased Korku. The Korkus believe that every human being consists of body, soul and spirit. At the death of a person the soul leaves with comparative ease the body and returns to God, his creator and master. But the spirit separates with difficulty from the body and haunts the cemetery, the village and the hut of the family. If the *sidoli* is long postponed, such a spirit might get impatient and dangerous. If a Korku has the intention to omit the celebration of the *sidoli* altogether, this may result in his death or at least in severe illness.

The *phul* ritual lasts three days; it begins always on a Monday and ends on a Wednesday. But it should be a Monday during fullmoon when this feast is celebrated. Usually it takes place in October or November, or in March or April, that is, after the summer or winter harvest.

In the afternoon of the Monday, on which the feast begins, all the guests assemble at the house of the celebrating family and then go into the forest to cut a bamboo. Men as well as women take part in this ceremony. On the way they sing merry wedding songs, but also mourning dirges. As soon as they have found a suitable bamboo—it must be a specially beautiful and strong pole—they surround it and wait intently for the first slight movement in the top branches. As soon as a twig moves, they express great satisfaction in the conviction that the deceased's spirit or soul is present in the bamboo. Now they tie a yellow or red string around the stem, break a coconut and anoint the bamboo with *kuku* (sacred red powder) and *haldi* (turmeric).

Then the main organiser of the feast cuts the bamboo with his axe. This is done with great reverence. Two men hold the bamboo lest it should fall on the ground. It should never even touch the ground. Then the main organiser of the feast takes the bamboo on his shoulder and carries it in procession to a river which he must approach from the west. At the river bank the bamboo is laid on some wooden blocks for it should not come in contact with the ground. The main organiser of the feast, looking towards the east, cuts with his axe the bamboo into two halves. In the opinion of the Korkus the spirit of the deceased rests in the lower parts of the bamboo, between two knots. The main organiser of the feast then extracts with great care seven pieces of the marrow from the lowest portion of the bamboo and places them on a white sheet which his wife or daughter holds ready. These seven small pieces do not represent the spirit of the deceased, but his bones or limbs.

The organiser of the feast, with his wife, accompanied by other people, now crosses the river. At the other river bank they look for a kind of grass called *dongria* (a juncus species). When they have found it, they tie a sacred thread around some stems and anoint it with turmeric. Then they dig out the roots and cut off seven pieces which they also put on the sheet with the seven pieces of bamboo marrow. These pieces of *dongria* roots also represent the bones of the dead.

Then the organiser of the feast dives into the river at a deep spot and searches for a crab. As soon as he finds one he tears off seven of its legs which he places also on the sheet, together with seven *haldi* sticks and a few grains of unhusked rice. All this is carried into the river and placed on a dry stone. Also a square bamboo basket is placed there, with a cover fitting the basket. Then the pieces of bamboo marrow, the seven roots, the seven turmeric sticks and the seven crab legs with the rice grains are all placed in the basket and the tight cover placed on it. The basket and its cover are wrapped seven times with yellow and red strings.

The content of the basket is called *phul*.[42] It is obvious that it is the central part of the *sidoli* around which the various subsequent ceremonies are grouped.

R.V. Russell claims that the *phul*—according to him the sticks of turmeric alone are so called—are stuck into a leaf cup, wrapped into a piece of cloth and hung up on the roof beam of the house. This is done already a few days after the funeral of the deceased, as he states, while according to my informants the basket is prepared on the day of the *sidoli* feast.[43] This former custom is in fact the more orthodox form of the veneration of the dead. But as the *phul* requires constant attention and daily sacrifices, this custom has come into disuse and the *phul* is now prepared only on the first day of the *sidoli* feast.

After the *phul* has been bundled carefully and placed on the stone in the river, which has been sanctified with a sacred swastica (*chauk* or *mandra*), the attending guests now approach one after the other, roll a *palas* leaf (*Butea frondosa*) into a cup and fill it with boiled pulses (*masur ki dal*). Coming from the west, they place their cup on the boulder near the *phul*, sprinkle liquor on it, and one of the men beheads a chicken. The liver and the head with the other ingredients for the sacrifice, as lemons, sticks of incense, powder of *kuku* and *sendur* (red lead), are placed on the boulder.

The master of ceremonies then takes the "bones" of the dead from the basket, dips them into the water and presses them slightly. If the water dripping from them is of red colour, it is accepted as a sign that the spirit of the deceased is really present in the basket. But now they stop singing merry songs. The wife of the master of ceremonies bows low over the *phul* and begins to mourn bitterly. The other women join her in mourning. Meanwhile the master of ceremonies returns the "bones" to the basket and puts the cover on it.

A boy about seven years old (*gomna*) now lifts up the basket and singing and mourning the procession returns to the village where the *phul* is hung on threads from the centre post of the house. From now on the boy must guard the *phul* and not leave it for a moment out of his eyes. According to other informants the *phul* is carried by the boy to every house of the relationship in which since the last *sidoli* feast a person has died. In every house the basket is placed in front of the centre post and a sacrifice is performed in the name of the deceased who died in the house.

After the usual veneration of the *phul* the people again sing wedding songs. Then the relatives of the deceased for whom the *sidoli* is mainly performed start their mourning dirges. The other women join in and sing the traditional often touching dirges. But they cease when the banquet is ready that has been prepared meanwhile. It consists of rice and chicken meat. But before the guests begin to eat, a sacrifice is performed in front of the *phul* as before. Then liquor is distributed, the women too get a share. The banquet usually takes place on the free space in front of the house between the two lines of houses in a Korku village.

After the banquet all the guests return to the house of the main organiser of the feast. He and his wife dress in wedding garments and both sit down in the same position which a bridal pair takes up in a wedding. As in marriage a corner of his loincloth is tied to an end of her upper garment. Frequently the place of the main organiser of the feast and his wife is taken by a boy and girl; but they should not belong to the same clan though both must be related to the organiser of the *sidoli* feast. Boy and girl (representing the organiser of the feast and his wife) are anointed with turmeric and required to sit together until midnight. Their garments remain tied together as in a wedding. The other guests sit around and sing wedding songs.

But about midnight there is a sudden change in the festive mood. The organiser of the *sidoli*, assisted by his wife and the boy guarding the *phul*, takes down the *phul* from the centre post and both, man and woman, begin a dance in which they indulge in clearly obscene repartees. If their place is taken by a boy and girl, these two are separated and seated in opposite corners of the room. From their seats they shout obscenities at each other. The other guests join them. Men and women sit opposite to each other in two groups; care is taken that parties who oppose each other are of about the same age. In these exchange of obscenities there is a predominence of encouragement to sexual intercourse and also the accusation of incestuous intercourse among themselves. The women and girls frequently threaten the men and lads that they would bite off their penises. They also accuse them of impotence. In fact it is believed that the men are impotent as long as the *sidoli* feast lasts. During the feast there is also for all participants the strict prohibition of sexual intercourse. A breach of this taboo is regarded as a calamity for all persons attending the feast. Such offences during the feast are therefore punished with particular severity.

These exchange of obscenities is carried on until the afternoon of the second day. Then guests from distant villages also arrive. They come with their ancient battle axes and spears, with sticks and drums and sing and dance untiringly in groups of twenty to forty men. The wife of the feast's organiser dances with the basket in her hands and with the boy guardian at her back amid the various groups. The boy has a long band of cloth wrapped round his head and mouth and holds the ends of the cloth in his hands—a sign, so the Korkus say—that he is in intimate contact with the spirits. The wife of the feast's organiser swings the *phul* up and down, then she circles around like possessed and suddenly she stops, opens her hair and drops the basket. This she repeats several times till her strength is completely exhausted. Then another woman closely related to the deceased takes the basket from her and takes up the dance in the same manner.

Towards evening a procession is formed slowly and it moves through the wide village street between the two rows of houses towards the place where in spring the Korkus play Holi. A he-goat is led to the Holi spot in the midst of a crowd of men singing and dancing and brandishing their weapons. The he-goat is surrounded by a crowd of boys swinging sticks at the top of which are carvings of birds.

The *phul* is carried in the procession under a canopy of honour. In front of the image of the village god, a flat stone slab under a *bor* tree (*Zyzibus jujuba*) they stop. The *phul* basket is laid on a white cloth in front of the idol. An offering is performed: it consists of a coconut, unrefined sugar, turmeric, *kuku*, rice, incense and *ghi*; two small chickens are beheaded. Then the he-goat is brought before the image of the village god. The victim is turned towards the east. The organiser of the feast anoints the goat with turmeric and tears out a few hairs from the head at the spot between the horns. The same ceremony is performed by his wife and by his son. Meanwhile some women bring a pot with parched millet grains. A woman takes the pot and breaks it over a boulder so that its content is scattered all over the place. The crowd rushes to the place and tries to grab a few grains or dip their weapons into the broth. The he-goat (of red colour, if possible) is led further towards east. The Korkus surround the animal in a wide circle. All of a sudden the shouting stops, also the ribald exchange of obscenities. All men are eager to kill the victim with an axe or sword. Finally this honour is conceded to a vigorous young man closely related to the organiser of the feast. He must cut off the animal's head with one stroke. When the blood gushes from the severed neck, all Korkus rush at the victim and dip their weapons into the blood. Those who have no weapons, put their sticks into the blood. Not a single drop of blood remains on the ground.

At sun-set the boy guardian takes the *phul* basket and accompanied by the organiser of the feast and his wife and about thirty men and women, proceeds to the river where at the river bank he hides the *phul* carefully in the branches of a *bor* tree. The *phul* is now considered to be dead and will be buried the next day. All the people disperse and only the invited guests receive a meal at the celebrating house. It lasts usually until sun rise.

On the next day the *phul* has to be carried to its final resting place, *i.e.*, in the home village of the deceased's clan, even if the village is many miles distant. The boy guardian again carries the *phul* in procession to its destined place, accompanied by the organiser of the feast, his wife and the fellow villagers. The procession starts from the river where on the previous evening the boy (*gumna*) had hidden the *phul*. Slowly the procession moves towards the ancestral village of the deceased's clan. The people dance on the way, sing and exchange obscenities as on the previous day. At a river near the ancestral village they stop. The organiser of the feast and his wife get a pot ready and cook a broth of rice. A little apart from the fire place the woman spreads a white cloth and places the *phul* basket on it. The boy again resumes his watch. He carries a dagger, which otherwise is used only at a wedding. The woman then opens the basket and starts a mourning song. The song ends in a wild sobbing during which the woman bows low over the basket and covers it with her hair. Finally the organiser of the feast makes an end to the emotional scene. He takes the rice and forms a ball in which he hides the "bones" of the deceased. A living crab should also be included in the ball of rice.

As the sun touches the horizon the boy takes the rice ball and accompanied by two men crosses the river in the direction of the setting sun. Reaching the river bank he dives under and shoves the rice ball into a crab hole. The place of the final rest of the deceased should be on the west side of the river so that the rising sun will shine on it in the morning. The boy who sticks the basket into the crab hole often falls into trance during the act; he is believed to be possessed by the spirit of the deceased.

The spirit even speaks through the boy and requests the relatives not to forget him, to offer him sacrifices on feast days and to lead a good life. The magicians then try to wake the boy from his trance. They recite their invocations and appeal mainly to *Chand gomoj* (the moon god) and remind him that they did a good work and for that reason the boy should not come to any harm.

The basket with the symbolic remains of the deceased is buried in a crab hole because it was according to the Korku tradition a crab which loaned the creator the red soil from which he formed the first man. This soil is now returned to the crab on the *sidoli* feast.

Finally a memorial banquet is held, and then the guests disperse. When they take leave, they embrace each other and ask pardon for all the offensive words which they had shouted at each other.

### The Erection of the Memorial Post

Here the ceremonies which lead to the erection of the memorial post are described separately from the *phul* ceremonies. But in fact, the two rituals are strongly mixed and the celebrants change in these three days continuously from one ritual into the other.

The memorial pillar, called *munda*, is now usually a square post of *sagwan* wood (*Tectonia grandis*) because this wood withstands longest rain and heat of the sun in the open. The *munda* is about five feet high, a third of which is sunk into the ground. The upper end of the post is pointed either in the form of a pyramid or of a roof. At one side of the *munda* the figures of the sun (in the form of a circle) and of the moon (in the form of an upright crescent) are carved into the wood, and below them the figure of a rider, probably representing the deceased. Russell mentions also that in case that the *munda* is erected for several persons more riders are carved into the post. But the Korkus are very careful not to carve more figures into the *munda* than have actually died in the family since the last *sidoli* feast, for in such a case a member of the family would have to die to make up the supernumerary figure.[44]

The carver of a *munda* must be a Korku, and he is remunerated according to the quality and artistic value of his work. The memorial pillars are in no case of equal value or made after a certain fixed scheme. There are *mundas* which consist of flat, broad boards running at the top into a point; this type of *mundas* might even be of stone. They resemble the memorial stones of the Bhils and Rajput in western India.[45] The Bhils, on the other hand, also have memorials of wood which resemble the Korku *munda*—square pillars with a pointed top. But on the whole they seem to prefer broad flat stone slabs as memorials.

In the Nimar District of Madhya Pradesh the Korkus alone erect such *munda* memorials; but in Berar other tribes too erect *mundas*, as for instance the Gonds and Nahals, and further south the Kolams, obviously a sub-section of the Gonds. Without doubt these tribes have adopted this usage from the Korkus, for in other regions neither the Nahals nor the Gond's erect *mundas*. Whether the Kolams are really a sub-section of the Gonds and not originally Mundarian, is still a question, since in racial constitution the Kolams resemble more the Korkus than the Gonds.

The word *munda* probably means 'sealing', or 'seal'. The word is still in use among the Korkus in connection with the last dinner at a wedding or funeral: it is called *mund-bhojan*. And the bullock which often is given at an engagement in addition to the bride price is also called *mund*—it is regarded as a seal on the contract. In Hindi *mundi* means 'ring', while 'seal' is called *mudra*. It is interesting to note that the Korkus use for their most typical feast a term of Indo-Aryan origin, though their mother tongue is Mundarian.

The *munda* must be erected in the ancestral village of the family or of the clan, even if the deceased has practically lived all his life at some distance from the ancestral village and has also died there. This is probably the reason why in newly established villages no *mundas* can be found, while even new *mundas* are erected in ancient village sites, even if since long abandoned by the original settlers for some reason or other.

A few days before the feast starts, the carver of the *munda* goes into the forest and searches for a suitable tree. The tree should show no deficiency and must be bulky enough so that a *munda* can be carved from it. On the first day of the *sidoli*, after the bamboo pole has been cut, the celebrants go with the carver once more into the forest, this time to cut the tree for the *munda*. On the way they sing and dance to the rhythm of their drums. When they have found the right tree, they surround it in a wide circle.

Now the wife of the feast's organiser with her husband comes forward and both squat down in front of the tree. It is now she—against all traditional regulations at an offering—who anoints the tree with *kuku* and turmeric and burns incense before it. Her husband then kills a chicken and smears its blood on the tree. Then the woman rises and embraces the tree with bitter tears and mourning. Then she gives the order to cut the tree. Her husband strikes the first blow. Usually they cut off first the crown, then a piece of the trunk large enough for the *munda*. This piece may not touch the ground; it must be held aloof. Then four thick branches are also cut off; they are called the arms and legs. While the tree is felled the women sing dirges.

The block of wood from which the *munda* is to be carved is carried by the men to a spot where the carver can work undisturbed. It is placed on the four stumps which had been cut from the branches of the tree. They were rammed into the ground to receive the block of wood. Other informants state that the block of wood is placed on the branches of a tree and that the carver must work on the tree. Sometimes the block is only roughly hacked into shape in the forest, then wrapped in a white sheet and carried into the house of the feast's organiser where the work is continued and completed. But in the former case the *munda* is fetched after the carving is completed. It is carried in procession to the house of the feast's organiser. This takes place on the second day of the *sidoli* feast.

In the house the *munda* is set up leaning against the centre post of the main room, at the side of the *phul*. Then a sacrifice is performed: wheat cakes, baked in *ghi*, a cock and a bottle of liquor are offered in sacrifice. Again it is the mistress of the celebrating family who performs the sacrifice. She bows down in front of the *munda* and touches the ground with her forehead. After her the other relatives of the deceased venerate the *munda* in the same manner. Often the *munda* is carried in procession to other houses and there venerated by the house inmates. Then the *munda* is returned to the house of the feast's organiser and placed on the lap of the mistress of the house. She affectionately embraces the *munda* and weeps over it. It is said that the woman often falls into trance and the spirit of the deceased speaks through her to the people. It discloses its identity and expresses satisfaction over the celebration of the *sidoli* feast. The woman who holds the *munda* on her lap is dressed like a bride and anointed with turmeric. People take good care that at least one corner of her dress is well soaked in turmeric water. Turmeric (*haldi*) is sprinkled also on the *munda*.

On the third day of the feast the *munda* is carried with the *phul* into the ancestral village of the deceased's clan. Before the *phul* is hidden in the crab hole, the *munda* is erected on the spot which the magician had designated for it. In the vicinity other *mundas* may be standing, for the Korkus believe that their ancestors like company and dislike isolation. They also wish to see their surviving relatives and for this reason a spot is preferred which is on a path near the village, often frequented by the villagers. Some people passing the *mundas* use to offer a pinch of tobacco or a lemon.

As already mentioned, the Korkus do not erect a *munda* for a deceased village magician (*parihar*). He gets a *mando*. This is a small hut, about three to six feet long and broad and three feet high. The hut is erected on a platform, about two feet high and often enclosed by a wooden frame. The *mando*[46] is erected on a spot designated by a *parihar*, either in a corner of the deceased's field or outside the village somewhere near a way, frequently at the joint of two streams under a shady tree. This *mando* may also be erected in a newly established village.

The *mando* is always built in a north-south direction so that the sacrificer is looking eastwards when he stands before the *mando*. The *mando's* roof is usually covered with grass, often even with tiles. In the hut the ground is smoothed with a layer of cow dung. Seven conical stones are erected in a straight row. The significance of these stones is not clear. Some Korkus maintain that they represent the "seven mothers", the centre stone, somewhat bigger, represents *Sitala mata*, the smallpox goddess. But others see in the centre stone the god *Bhairom*, surrounded by mother-goddesses while the stone at the extreme end of the row represents the deceased *parihar*. Another informant maintained that the centre stone represents the dead magician, and the other stones deceased relatives of his family.

The erection of the *mando* does not usually coincide with the celebration of the *sidoli* feast. The nearest kinsman of the deceased *parihar* goes with men and women of each family of the village to the river. There with the assistance of three boys and four girls he selects the required stones from the river bed. The stones are then anointed with turmeric by all the kinsmen of the deceased and are carried by the boys (*gomna*) and girls (*gumni*) to the *mando*. The same boys and girls build up the *mando* also. Then a sacrifice is performed, the victims being a white cock and a he-goat. Both are beheaded. The stones are anointed with the blood of the victims, and pieces of their liver and of their heads are placed in front of the stones.

Later, on fullmoon nights usually, the kinsmen of the deceased *parihar* again perform offerings. Villagers passing the *mando* occasionally may offer a pinch of tobacco.

## Conclusion

It is obvious that the *phul* ritual of the Korkus resembles the *phulera* ritual of the Baigas and Gonds in the *laru kaj*. There is no necessity here to point out all the parallels. But it is significant that the Korkus perform the *phul* ritual for a deceased member of the family or clan, while the Gonds and Baigas celebrate it for the spirit of the sacrificial pig. Another difference is the final disposal of the *phul*, resp. the *phulera*: The Korkus bury it in the crab hole, the Gonds and Baigas in the *narda* ditch. The goat sacrifice in the *phul* ritual of the Korkus resembles more the *meriah* sacrifice of the Khonds than the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baigas. Like the Khonds, the Korkus too find magic power and fertility in the blood and sacrificial flesh. The Khonds use it for their fields, the Korkus however for their weapons.

The connection of the *phul* ritual with the burial ceremony is in this form known only among the Korkus. The funeral rites of the other Munda tribes and also of the neighbouring Dravida-speaking tribes are different. The erection of menhirs and other stone memorials is however wide-spread among the jungle tribes in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and even in South India.

What is remarkable in the *munda* ritual of the Korkus is the role of the feast organiser's wife: when the tree is felled she performs a sacrifice. She is dressed and anointed like a bride. The *munda* is placed on her lap. Dirges are sung, but also wedding songs. These rites may remind us strongly of the "funeral wedding" previously described.

## THE FUNERAL RITES OF OTHER CENTRAL INDIAN HILL TRIBES

Similar funeral rites are performed by other Central Indian hill tribes, especially those of Chotanagpur. But these rites are performed because motivated by common beliefs about the existence of two souls in human beings, one of which they want to unite with the company of the ancestors ([illegible] it is done in the *Sapiṇḍākaraṇa* of the Vedic Indians) and the other they want to invite into their houses to stay with them and protect them.

The Birhor, for instance, are one of the most primitive Munda tribes. A section of this tribe still refuses to settle down to cultivation. They remain mere hunters of small animals and collect vegetables and fruits in the forest. When a Birhor dies, loud wailing starts and all routine activities stop. Soon the corpse is washed and anointed with oil and then laid on an improvised bier and carried head forward to the cremation ground. Some Birhor families prefer to bury their dead. For seven or nine days the nearest relatives of the deceased consider themselves impure, but make food offerings to provide provision for the soul on its way into the other world.

In the evening of the seventh or ninth day a ceremony is enacted to bring back the shade soul of the deceased into the hut of the family. A sacrifice of a chicken is performed halfway to the cemetery to the evil spirits that they may allow the soul of the deceased safely to follow them to the hut and settlement of the relatives. There the shade soul is supposed to help and protect the inmates of the hut against sickness and misfortune.

The incorporation of the other soul with the ancestor spirits takes place later and is more elaborate. More people must be invited and entertained to a better dinner. There is even a special feast in honour of the spirits of the family or clan, or the locality, the *Ora-Bonga-Puja*. Several rites, as performed at the *Ora-Bonga-Puja*, remind us of the *sidoli* feast of the Korkus.

Thus the bones of the deceased whose soul is to be incorporated with the ancient spirits are first reproduced in symbolic form by a complicated ritual. They are finally reproduced as a little vermilion stick in a snuff box. Then sacrifices to the *Ora-Bongas* have to be performed, of one or several fowls, or a goat, or even a bullock. The nomadic (Uthlu) clans generally sacrifice pigs to their *Ora-Bongas.* And the pigs are sacrificed by the *kutam* method, that is, by striking them at the neck with the butt-end of the axe, avoiding the shedding of blood at the sacrifice. If the victim is a fowl, its head is specially prepared and roasted and each participant takes a tiny part of the head and offers it to the *Ora-Bongas* with a prayer: "We offer this head to you; enjoy this meal and drink; give us health and luck in the chase".

Finally there is a common meal[47].

The Mundas, a much more numerous and powerful tribe, observe very similar funeral rites. But the second burial of the bones of a deceased Munda is quite different and lacks many details of the *sidoli* feast of the Korkus. This second burial is performed at a time when the kinsmen of the deceased are financially in a position to meet the heavy expenses of the ritual. It is usually held after the harvest of the winter crop.

First of all they go to a hillside and select a new stone, in case a new stone monument is to be set up over the bones of the deceased member of the family. Where stones are scarce, one stone slab will have to serve for all the deceased members of the family.

The stone is transported into the village of the deceased. It should be carried by men all the way. Then the day is fixed on which the second burial of the bones is to be carried out. All the relatives of the celebrating family are invited, and come on the day with gifts of rice, pulse, beer and other provisions.

In former times the Mundas cremated their dead and even before the pyre was burnt down, a few bone pieces were selected and placed in an earthen pot, and the pot later hung up on a near big tree.

Now with the universal adoption of burial the grave is usually reopened on the eve of the feast and some bones removed. They are submitted to a cremation and then an offering is made of rice cooked with turmeric. Then the bones are placed in a new earthen pot which is hung up for the night under the eaves of the roof at the back of the house.

On the feast day all the celebrating relatives are ceremoniously shaved and take a bath. Then a magician or witchfinder digs two pits closely together in the courtyard. A buffalo is brought and felled with the butt-end of an axe, and small pieces are taken from its mouth, ears and feet and thrown into one of the pits. After that other things too are thrown into the pit and covered with earth by the witchfinder.

Then a procession is formed and starts for the place of burial (*sasan*). There a goat is killed and all the stones already established there are touched with the bloody neck of its head. The new stone slab and others around it are washed with water, rubbed with oil and daubed with turmeric. A pit is dug at the one end of the stone for which purpose this end is somewhat lifted up. The pot with the bones is placed in the pit and covered with earth. Then the stone is again lowered over it.

Then the village priest sacrifices a gray-speckled fowl asking the ancestors to admit the deceased into their company.

A libation of rice-beer on all the stone monuments in the *sasan* follows. Then all go and take a bath in a near river or stream. The head of the celebrating family is specially treated and sprinkled with a twig of *tuṛusi* (*Ocimum sanctum*) and rice grains. After him all the others are sprinkled with the water.

Finally a banquet is prepared and all the guests liberally entertained.

It appears that the ritual of the bone burial, as practised by the Mundas, is much simpler than that of the Korkus. Their stone monuments are much larger and cruder and not artistically carved as the *munda* of the Korkus. It is possible that the Korkus, for centuries separated from the main Munda stock, have in the course of time developed their own specific ritual and enriched it with rites practised by other tribes and peoples in their present neighbourhood.[48]

The Oraons, another numerous and important tribe in Chotanagpur, but also in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, share practically most of the beliefs and practices about death, the soul and after-life with the other tribes of eastern Central India.

The Oraons cremate or bury their dead with appropriate ceremonies and collect the bones left behind in an earthen pot. Like the Mundas, they too invite the "shade" of the deceased back into the house. They erect a miniature hut on a spot half-way to the burial ground, set fire to it and tell the spirit that there is now no alternative but to return to its former home. Some ceremonies are performed in the house to make it stay. Regular offerings are performed and as long as the deceased member of the family is remembered and honoured by oblations and offerings, it is expected to make the family prosper and to ward off misfortune and illness.

After the harvest or when money is available to meet the considerable expenses of the feast of the reburial of the bones, invitations are sent out to all relatives and friends to take part in the feast. The place where the bones of the deceased are finally set at rest is the sacred place in the ancestral village of the deceased. Only if the new village is at a considerable distance from its ancestral village, an Oraon family gradually gives up the practice of taking the bones to that village and consigns the bones to the *kuṇḍi* of the adopted village.

The small earthenware jars containing the bones of the different deceased Oraons of the village are carried by their respective female relatives who go dancing. This ceremony of reburial of the bones is significantly called by the Oraons *kohā benjā* (the great marriage) or *Pāchgi benjā* (marriage of the old people). The *laru kaj* of the Gonds too was considered as a marriage! For each deceased, a female relative carries to the *kuṇḍi* the portion of rice left at the grave or cremation ground. Drummers accompany the procession consisting of the family members of the deceased, the villagers male and female, and the relatives from outside.

After arriving at the *kuṇḍi*, the men snatch away the urns from the women who have carried them, consign the bones into the water and smash the pots to pieces by striking them against the stone monuments of their clans. The women then wash the monuments and anoint them with vermilion diluted in oil. Then the village priest sprinkles water mixed with turmeric powder all around. The women offer on leaf-plates half-boiled rice and pulse on the spot where the bones had rested before they were immersed in the water. Such offerings are made also in front of the clan stone monuments. Then all take a purificatory bath, and return to their home. But in the evening there is a big feast, a banquet with much drinking and dancing.

These were the customary funeral rites of the Oraons a century ago as Sarat Chandra Roy described them.[49] He already remarked that the Oraons were inclined to omit their old customs, as many Oraons adopted modern Hindu rites, while Oraons converted to the Christian religion observed now funeral rites as customary among Christians all over the world.

The Santhals, the main and most numerous Munda tribe, observe generally very similar funeral rites as the other tribes in the region. But already fifty years ago anthropologists observed that the Santhals appeared to be more strongly influenced by Hindu beliefs and practices.

When a Santhal dies, he (or she) is usually cremated on the same day. Before the fire of the pyre has died down, a bone from the forehead of the deceased is collected and deposited in a pot which is buried under a Sal tree (*Boswellia serrata*). Then all go home, after performing the customary rites and taking a bath of purification.

A meal is prepared, but taken to the crossroad. There a small hut is built and dedicated to *Marang Buru*, the chief deity, and the deceased's spirit. After due propitiation, the hut is set on fire and completely burnt down. Then all return home. Some men fall into a trance and impersonate *Marang Buru* and the deceased and inquire whether the death was natural or caused by black magic and ill-will. If all is right, a meal of rice and vegetables is prepared and placed on leaf-plates into a basket which is hung on a rafter in the hut. Next day the basket is inspected whether the spirit of the deceased has partaken of the meal and settled in the house.

When the day of the "drowning of the bones" in the holy waters of the Damodar river comes, the elders of the village with the headman assemble and make some men impersonate *Marang Buru* and the deceased's spirit to indicate the person who is to carry the bones and the remnants of the sun-dried rice deposited on the grave on the day of funeral to the river for the final immersion. A procession is formed, the bones carried to the river and deposited at a spot where the current is strong. After that all the attendants have a shave and take a bath in the river. The women too bathe. Then a sacrifice is performed and rice-beer offered. Finally a banquet is held in the house for the relatives of the deceased, while the villagers are treated liberally with rice beer.[50]

At the conclusion of the feast some Santhals, impersonating Brahmans and Vaishnavas, turn up and demand their dues. Also the barber, acting his part, demands some gift, as it is done in the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baiga and the *sidoli* feast of the Korkus. Ever again in these rituals some instances turn up which seem to belong to an old forgotten ritual.

The funeral rites of the Hos, another Munda tribe, have been described by E. Dalton.[51] The Hos too burn their dead. This is usually done in front of the house where the death occurred. On the next morning they collect the remaining bigger bones and hang them in an earthen pot in the dwelling room of the widow or mother of the deceased. There in the room the remains are kept until the very substantial preparations for their final disposal have been made. A large grave stone must be fetched, so heavy that several men are required to carry it.

The burial place of the family is near the residence. There a deep round pit is dug. When all is ready a group of three or four young men with very low-tuned drums and about eight young girls assemble at the house, carrying on a plate the bones; the girls follow in pairs carrying empty and partly broken pitchers and jugs; finally the men come with their drums. In slow dancing steps to the rhythmic beating of the deeptuned drums the procession proceeds, sometimes going off the way at the right and then at the left. In certain intervals they stop and the woman takes the plate with the bones from her head, while the girls lower their pitchers and jugs and turn them upside down.

In this manner the remains are carried to the house of each relative or friend in the range of several miles. As soon as the procession reaches a house, the inmates step before the door where the plate is placed on the ground. They kneel down and bow mourning and weeping over the bones. The remains are also carried to places where the deceased had worked and hunted, enjoyed himself and danced—on his field, his threshing floor, the dance place and the jungle.

Finally the procession returns to the burial place and walks slowly round the stone slab lying ready. Now boiled and unboiled rice is thrown into the grave, the bones are laid into the earthen pot and the pot is deposited in the grave. The grave is filled with earth and the big stone slab is placed over it on small stones as support.

Besides that, stone pillars of sometimes very peculiar shape are sometimes erected outside the village at a spot visible from far. This is done in honour of the deceased.[52]

The Kharias believe that every human being has two souls, the *jiom* and the *longoe*. The *jiom* is immaterial and immortal. At death the *jioms* go underground where they are united with their forefathers and live in the same way as men do on earth. Married women at death go to the abode of the deceased ancestors of their respective husbands.

In the case of a cremation, the bones of the deceased are collected and placed in a small earthen pot which is, in most cases, hung up in some tree and, later, taken either to the village originally inhabited by the deceased's clan to be deposited in the clan ossuary there, or exposed in the earthen pot in a river or a pool. Thus is the union of the *jiom* of the deceased with those of the predeceased ancestors and relatives finally effected. This kind of second burial reminds us of the *phul* ritual of the Korkus.

In the case of burial, generally nine days after the funeral, the relatives of the deceased and all the villagers assemble and the village magician (*deonra*) performs several fowl sacrifices cutting off their heads with an axe. While sacrificing he chants his spells and sings his prayers, asking the soul of the deceased not to trouble the surviving relatives. All the sacrifices are performed over an ant-hill previously broken open. After that all take a bath and then sit down to a dinner at which goat's meat is served if the celebrating family can afford it.[53]

Besides the *jiom* or immaterial soul every man and woman is believed to have a *longoe* or *chhain* (shade) soul which keeps company with the *jiom* during the person's lifetime. When the man or woman dies it is the *longoe* which is ceremoniously called back and accommodated in the cooking room. While the soul of a Kharia may eventually be re-incarnated and reborn and finally united with the ancestors, the *longoe* remains in the house watching over the inmates and protecting them from harm so long as libations and sacrifices of offerings to them are not neglected. But the Kharias have a short memory.[54]

The Juangs too cremate their dead and throw the ashes into some river. But they do not erect stone monuments nor do they make offerings to the deceased.[55]

It is interesting that the Bhainas offer after the death of a man a cock, after the death of a woman a hen to their supreme deity *Nakti Devi*. The victim must first pick up a few grains of rice in the courtyard, then on the door sill and finally in the inner room of the house. Only then may the animal be sacrificed.[56]

The Gonds of Mandla District cremate their dead. They pour the ashes of the dead sometimes into the Narbada river while they say: "Prince, resp. princess, go into heaven." They also erect stone monuments.

But the Gonds of Bastar State whom W.V. Grigson has described, are building elaborate menhirs.[57] At the erection ceremony cows or pigs, or both, are sacrificed. The sacrifice takes place in the house of the main heirs of the dead, in front of the pot of ancestors. The victim is killed with the blunt end of the axe. The tail of the sacrificed cow is hung up over the just erected menhir. They too have the rule that a stone monument should be erected in the home village of the dead, not in the village where he stayed when death overtook him. Instead of a menhir they erect sometimes a wooden pillar.[58]

The Gadabas residing in the hilly tracts in the south of the Gonds bury their dead with the feet pointing toward the west. The funeral feast lasts nine days. On the last day a cow or bullock is killed. The killing is done with the blunt end of the axe. The function of the sacrificer is hereditary in certain families of the tribe. Some blood of the victim is mixed with boiled rice and placed in a leaf cup on the grave. The flesh is cooked and eaten at the grave. On feast days liquor is offered to the dead.[59]

Among the Khasis a bull or pig is offered, *i.e.* let loose, before the cremation of the body. The horns of the animal are gilt or covered with silver, rice is poured on it and it is sprinkled with water. Any one who catches the animal may keep it or slaughter it.

After the cremation of the dead the bones left over are collected and three times buried at different places. For the spirits of the dead stone monuments are erected.[60]

Among the Ahoms not only animals were sacrificed as funeral offerings, but also women and servants, at least at the death of kings and dignitaries. The victims were buried with the corpse of their master.[61]

Not only among the Nagas, but also among the northern Karens and Chins human sacrifices at the death of chiefs were common. The Naga tribes buried usually only the skulls of companion victims along with their deceased chiefs in the same grave, while the Karens seem to have buried the slaves alive with their deceased master.[62]

Among the Dards, a tribe on the Tibetan boundary, the dead are cremated. The charred bones are then collected and buried in a small wooden coffin on a platform under a straw roof for shorter or longer time. In the cover of this provisional coffin a human face is carved. At this side of the coffin hang the weapons and the cloth-bag of the dead. Also the horns of the game which he has killed are added to them. Around the platform they erect five long bamboo poles; wooden figures of a flying bird are stuck on the tops of these poles. As soon as the relatives of the dead have made all necessary preparations, the final burial of the ashes takes place. This is connected with a great feast for all neighbours and often develops into an orgy. The organisers of the funeral feast are bound to entertain the guests in the most generous manner with food and drink.

The feast finds its climax in the sacrifice of a buffalo or *mithun*. After that many vessels with fermented grain are emptied. A wealthy man gives the most splendid funeral feast to show his wealth, but also to gain the favour of the spirits of the dead.[63]

While the erection of memorial stones for the dead in the north-east and east of the Korku area is a custom common to most jungle tribes living in this area, we find it in western Central India only among the Bhils, Bhilalas and Rajputs. These are the so-called *gata*, flat stone slabs which in an upright position show the figure of a man on horse-back and frequently beneath it the figure of a woman with a pot on her head. Above these figures we see the figures of the sun and moon carved in relief. A *gata* stone is erected only for prominently or very wealthy deceased.

The ceremonies of the erection of a *gata* are simple: the stone carved into proper shape is wrapped into a white sheet (funeral sheet) and often is laid into the lap of the feast organiser's wife. Then the stone is put on a cart and ferried to the spot where it is to be put up. On the way wedding songs are sung. Before the *gata* is erected a goat is sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the front side of the stone. A festive banquet with plenty of alcoholic drinks for all attending guests concludes the feast.

In autumn, a fortnight after Diwali, the light festival of the Hindus, a sacrifice is performed annually before the *gata* stone; a goat or a cock is sacrificed, the head and the liver of the victim, *ghi* and liquor are placed in front of the *gata*.[64]

W. Koppers is of the opinion that the erection of the *gata* stones is no genuine Bhil custom, but has been adopted by them from the Rajputs or Gujars.[65] He is probably right in this assumption. The simple ritual for the erection of the *gata* stones is remarkable when we compare it with the abundance of rites on this occasion among the Korkus and other tribes. The Bhils and Bhilalas adopted the Rajput or Gujar rites only partially.

A single instance from Celebes will prove that similar rites are performed also in Indonesia. Here too the funeral rites assume the sacrificial form with which we are familiar in the ritual of the *laru kaj* or the *meriah*.[66]

The Toradjas of Celebes let their dead decompose in the house. The tightly closed coffin remains in the house of mourning till the family has raised the means for the expenses which the celebration of the funeral feast and the transfer of the dead into the rock vault will cost. When the relatives have the money the village headman fixes the day on which the feast will be held. Then a near hill is chosen as the centre of the feast. If such feasts are always held on the same spot, there is no need to erect a number of stone blocks in a circle or in two rows, since the stone blocks have been erected long ago; but if a new festive centre is chosen in a village, at least wooden posts are rammed into the ground. Their purpose is to tie to them the buffalo victims.

On the eve of the festive day, early in the morning, the corpse is carried to the place where the feast will be held. The corpse is placed in a small hut on a projecting platform specially erected for this purpose. At its back the widow and the children of the deceased take place until the feast is over.

On the following day several buffaloes, a great number of pigs and innumerable fowls are sacrificed. The Toradjas choose for their funeral feast always black buffaloes, while in other regions of Central Celebes white buffaloes are preferred. The buffalo is killed by a single stab with a spear which pierces the heart. The victim is often before the sacrifice decorated with flowers and its horns are painted yellow. The killed buffalo is at once skinned and the skin is stretched on the ground. The flesh is then divided, boiled and eaten by all attending the feast.

In former times they sometimes sacrificed a human being instead of a buffalo. "The reason for a human sacrifice was—mainly the death of a chief whose soul required a servant in the other world. The deceased was not buried before the required funeral sacrifice could be performed and a captured head laid on the coffin. In addition, epidemic diseases, drought, earthquake, etc. were also accepted as reasons why a human sacrifice should be performed to pacify the offended spirits. The killing was done in a very cruel manner, through weak blows with a *klewang* (knife). Every man had to redden his knife in the blood of the tortured victim till at last the unfortunate man was despatched by a stab with the lance.[67]

The brain of the victim was distributed among the men and the head later hung up as a sacrificial gift in the rafters of the house (of the spirits).

## SUMMARY

In this chapter it was tried to show that to a large extent the same peoples and tribes which in their sacrifices to the gods and spirits apply a ritual which resembles that of the *laru kaj* or that of the *meriah* also use the same ritual for their funeral sacrifices. In many instances the victims for the sacrifice to the dead are the same as those for the gods honoured by the same ritual; among the north-eastern Siberian and the North-American tribes the bear, the dog or birds of prey which previously had been captured and tamed; among the Inner-Asiatic, Caucasian and partly also among the

Indo-Germanic tribes and reindeer, the horse or occasionally also a human being, among the tribes of Asia Minor, India, Indo China and Indonesia a human being, or in its place a buffalo.

The victim is "sent" into the other world, admittedly this time not as mediator and divinely venerated messenger who has to plead for the interests of the men who sacrifice him, but in the service or for the guidance of the deceased. The sacrifice of women probably led to the performance of wedding rites as we know them from the ritual of the funeral marriage and perhaps also from the *sidoli* feast of the Korkus, and even in the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baigas.

Among many tribes of Inner Asia (the Buriats, for instance) and of India the victim is killed through a blow at the head. While the "messenger" to the deity is usually killed by strangulation or while at least the breaking of any bones is carefully avoided, since the victim's return in rebirth is ardently wished for, in the sacrifice accompanying the funeral the skull is perhaps just for this reason broken so that the victim may not return into this world but always remain in the service of the deceased. Remarkable also is the destruction or dismantling of the funeral cart which we find in Inner Asia among the Buriats, and again in South India among the Badagas and Uralis.

## NOTES

1. W. Caland, 1896, 20.
2. W. Caland, 1896, 20-1.
3. W. Caland, 1896, 40-1.
4. W. Caland, 1896, 42.
5. W. Caland, 1896, 42-4.
6. *Cf.* W. Caland, 1896, 55-6.
7. A. Hillebrandt, 1897, 87-92.
8. A. Zolotarev, 1937, 113 ff.
9. *Cf.* W. Koppers, 1930, 364; A.L. Kroeber, 1899, 312; Rasmussen, 1907, 135 ff.
10. H. Egede, 1923, 102; *cf.* also: F. Nansen, 1903, 221.
11. W. Koppers, 1930, 367 ff.
12. cf. Funk and Wagnalls 1973, 780.
13. Similar beliefs are found also in the folk tales of the Gonds and Baigas. V. Elwin (1939, 359) mentions a myth in which the life spirit (*jiv*) of a man was hidden in a parrot which was hung up in a golden cage on a tree beyond the seven lakes. Sometimes the life-spirit of a

man is hidden in a sword or in an arrow.

14. The idea of a guardian spirit in the form of an animal is frequent in Indian folk tales. *Cf.* V. Elwin, 1944, 417 ff. and 1942, 78 f.
15. Uno Harva, 1938, 276 f.
16. I. Löwenberg, 1880, 185.
17. K.F. Karjalainen, 1918, 119.
18. R. Bleichsteiner, 1936, 490; E.W. Pfizenmayer, 1926, 108.
19. J. Curtin, 1909, 101.
20. When the dead are buried without being burnt, the corpse is either carried on a wagon, or it is placed upright in front of a living man on horseback so as to ride to its last resting place. The saddle is broken up and laid at the bottom of the grave, while the body is turned to face the south-east. In this case they also sacrifice the horse which is believed to have gone to its master, ready for use.
21. Uno Ḥarva, 1938, 324.
22. J. Maringer, 1942-45, 65 ff., O. Schrader, 1904, 19.
23. O. Schrader, 1904, 26-30.
24. R. Bleichsteiner, 1936, 413-495.
25. R. Bleichsteiner, 1936, 448.
26. R. Bleichsteiner, 1936, 478; Fr. Justi, 1879, 97; I. Löwenberg, 1880, 43.
27. I. Löwenberg, 1880, 40.
28. E. Wienecke, 1940, 93.
29. E. Wienecke, 1940, 86, 92, 276.
30. Th. von Schaffer, (w.D.) 164.
31. M. Ninck, 1935, 94.
32. W.H.H. Rivers, 1906, 727.
33. *Cf.* W. Marshall, 1873, 176; M.J. Walhouse, 1874, Vol. 3, 93 and 274.
34. A double funeral takes place in North and Central Australia, in North and South America, in Africa, on the islands of Indonesia and the Pacific and in ancient Europe. *Cf.* I.N. Winnikow, 1930, 210.
35. W.H.R. Rivers, 1906, 337-400.
36. E. Thurston, 1909, III, 121.
37. E. Thurston, 1909, I, 70 f.
38. E. Thurston, 1909, VII, 255.
39. It is perhaps permitted to point out in this connection the remarkable. Neolithic grave found at Töllik in Austria. Here with the exception of a separate horse skull the skeletons of two horses, two cattle, two goats and two sheep have been found. Also in Avarian graves the skeletons of full-grown mares and of foals have often been found. Is it far-fetched to assume that these animals too had been companion sacrifices ? *Cf.* W. Amschler, 1949, 30 and 56.
40. W. Koppers, 1939, 548 ff.; 1942, 165-83; R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 565; S. Fuchs, 1988, 297-312.
41. While the *sidoli* feast is celebrated for all the deceased members of the celebrating family, the memorial stone (*munda*) is erected for an important man only.
42. Compare with this *phul* the *phulera* of the Baigas in the *laru kaj*.

43. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 565.
44. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 565 f.
45. W. Koppers, 1942, 117-206.
46. *Mando* is probably identical with *mandap*, a Hindi word, which signifies a small hut, a watchman's shelter.
47. Sarat Chandra Roy, 1925, 261-83, 333-9.
48. M. Topno, 1955, 730-4.
49. S. Ch. Roy, 1928, 178-89.
50. Ch. Mukherjee, 1962, 220-30.
51. E. Dalton, 1872, 202 f.
52. *Cf.* also: P.R.T. Gurdon, 1907, 143 f.
53. S. Ch. Roy, 1937, 282-302, E.T. Dalton, 1872, 160.
54. S. Ch. Roy, 1937, 282-4.
55. E.T. Dalton, 1872, 158.
56. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, II, 231.
57. W.V. Grigson, 1938, 278.
58. W.V. Grigson, 1938, 281.
59. R.V. Russell and Hiralal, 1916, III, 12 f.
60. F. Stegmuller, 1921-2, 430 ff.; P.R.T. Gurdon, 1907, 141; 1914, 140 f.
61. R. von Heine-Geldern, 1917, 41.
62. R. von Heine-Geldern, 1917, 31; *Cf.* also: E.A. Gait, 1898, 62; C.M. Godden, 1897, 161 and 1898, 2 ff.; T.S. Hodson, 1911; K. Klamm, 1898, 281 ff.
63. F.K. Ward, 1937, 80.
64. W. Koppers, 1942, 117-206.
65. W. Koppers, 1942, 115 f.
66. A Grubauer, 1913, 350 ff.
67. A. Grubauer, 1913, 389 f.

# 10

# RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

WHAT are now the results which we may deduce from this study? What conclusions can be drawn from the description and confrontation of so many similar and in details yet so different sacrifical rites and of the religious ideas and beliefs lying at their basis?

The following facts can be accepted as certain :

1. On the basis of the sacrificial rites described in this study for the whole of Asia intimate and deep-rooted cultural relations can be assumed between primitive hunting and foodgathering cultures on the one side and of nomadic animal breeders and agrarian cultures on the other.
2. India is since earliest prehistory included in the cultural and religious circle and range of Asia.
3. There exists a very ancient sacrificial rite in the Asiatic culture circle in which the following elements are clearly discernible:
    (a) The belief in a powerful deity who guides the course of the world and above all the growth of plants, animals and men. This deity can be propitiated by prayer and sacrifice.
    (b) The belief in a life after death in a kind of rebirth or return in some way or other into this world, consequently in a survival of the soul after death.

(c) The deep conviction of the efficacy of sacrifice (of animal or man) in the character of a "messenger and intermediary" with the deity for the petitioners. The victim is nearly deified through the—if possible voluntary—acceptance of this function as intermediary by the victim.

(d) The belief that the victim can be revived if the bones etc. are preserved intact.

(e) The conviction that any one who participates in the sacrificial banquet receives merit through the sacrifice.

(f) The conviction that the victim for this sacrifice should be the most valuable and the most noble animal in the possession of the sacrificers, or even a human being.

(g) The conviction that the principle of life is in the breath of animal or man to be sacrificed.

(h) The custom that the head of the family or family group is its main priest and sacrificer.

The last two points are changed in most agrarian cultures: cultivators generally locate the principle of life not in the breath, but rather in the blood and flesh, and perhaps also in certain inner organs as the heart or the liver. The sacrificing priest is no more alone and mainly the head of the family or clan, but the shaman, *i.e.* a man who through special psychic abilities acts as an intermediary between god and man selected and appointed as such by the deity itself.

(i) The fact that so many parallels exist which among the primitive hunters as well as also among the nomadic animal breeders and the agrarian tribes constitute the centre and heart piece of their religion allows us with a certain degree of certainty the conclusion that these sacrificial rites have a common origin and consequently represent religious rites which somehow reach back to very early stages of religion and thus of culture itself.

Starting from the Vedic horse sacrifice in its splendour and grandeur we become acquainted with much more primitive and simpler forms of ritual but with the same basic conceptions in various stages of economic and social constitution of peoples not only of the Asian continent, but also on the adjoining belt of peninsulas and islands.

The idea that a benevolent deity in the disguise of the noblest and most useful wild animal comes to man and allows itself to be killed as provider of food and clothing may have first originated among the hunters and foodgatherers. To show their gratitude they dramatised in solemn ceremonies the "sending-back" of this good spirit into the other world through a ceremonial preparation for the meal and the "burial" of those parts (bones for instance) whose undamaged condition was a necessary state for the rebirth or the return of the wild animals used as game. The conviction that this benevolent deity itself visited them in the wild animal may have led to the desire to keep this deity longer with them and to give it in the shape of this animal a particularly good treatment. Since it was probably impossible for these primitive hunters to capture full-grown wild animals and to keep them in captivity for a long time, they caught young animals to which especially the young women gave an affectionate and special care. This keeping and taming of an animal in which they believed the deity being present has not always found its conclusion in the bloody sacrifice of this animal. The bear alone seems always have been sacrificed—as it was expressly stated for the keeping of a full-grown bear was impossible for men of such primitive economic circumstances. This could not be applied to other animals also, so far eagles, for instance, which were often kept in captivity until their natural death and were well treated. This mental attitude has then among these peoples sometimes taken a peculiar development. Occasionally it evolved into a kind of individual totemism or nagualism. But this did not happen everywhere.

This ritual of keeping and taming animals was perhaps an important factor which finally not only led to the taming but also to the breeding of such animals as a special form of economy. In any case we find not only among the primitive hunters of North-East Siberia and North-America this same sacrificial ritual, but also among the nomadic shepherd races.

The peculiar manner of killing the victim through crushing or strangling can perhaps be explained by the effect to be able to send the victim intact or at least outwardly unwounded into the other world. Besides that, no bones should be broken because on this condition depended the revival of the killed animal. Thus the victim was crushed or strangled or at the most killed by a stab or shot into the heart, because in this manner the violent form of death was hidden or became less apparent. We must not forget that the sacrifice was conceived as a dramatic action, as this is particularly clearly expressed in the bear cult of the Woguls.

As far as the nomadic animal breeders are concerned, their sacrificial ritual too is very ancient. If it has been at all of importance in the evolution of their peculiar form of economy—which we may never be able to prove, but which is possible—it must go back naturally to the earliest time of the existence of the nomadic shepherds as an independent form of culture. But even if that were not so, the accompanying rites suggest a very high age of this sacrificial form. It bears the features of a primitive sacrifice, so that A. Gahs does not hesitate to putting it into connection with the religion of the earliest form of culture.

The nomadic animal breeders, who apparently had much longer than other cultural groups retained pure and alive their conception of a high god, sacrifice the horse or reindeer to the high god or to his hypostases. The sacrificial rites are substantially the same as those practised by the primitive hunters, only that usually the ritual "soothing" and "deception" of the victim about the person of the sacrificers is dispensed with. We find it of much importance among the hunters. But the animal breeders do not fear the spirit of their domestic animals as much as the hunters fear that of the wild animals which indeed are often dangerous. The idea of getting hurt through the revenge of the victim's spirit is therefore not so common among the animal breeders than among the hunters.

As already among the hunting tribes, among the animal breeders too a peculiar connection has developed between this sacrificial rite and that of the funeral rite. Not only that at the death of a man the usual funeral ritual was now also applied for the victim killed in sacrifice, whether it died after a long ritual dedication and care of a natural death or found a violent death through sacrifice, frequently just this form of sacrifice was performed at the funeral feast of a fellow tribesman. If the deceased had a special guardian god or spirit, whom he saw represented in his pet, it was quite natural that at the death of a man his pet was sent after him into death. But where this belief in a guardian spirit was not the source for such a custom, it may have been the idea that a deceased needed animals or even human beings on his way into the other world for guidance and accompaniment, for service or even for pleasure (women). The animals (and even human beings) which were most commonly selected for such sacrifices were naturally those which were most familiar to the deceased when he was still alive. But such sacrifices of horses and human beings at funeral feasts we find first among the nomadic animal breeders, not or only rarely among the hunters.

The nomadic animal breeders had many elements of this sacrificial rite in common with the hunting tribes of North-East Asia, even the belief to find the principle of life in the breath, and that the sacrifice could be revived as long as the bones were kept intact. Another important point in which they agreed was the endeavour through their sacrifice to ask the deity to grant them fulfilment of their desires, not to force the deity. In this attitude their sacrificial rites differ from those of the agrarian tribes. The latter, still on Asiatic soil, see the principle of life in the blood and believe in the magic and automatic efficacy of the sacrifice, independent from a deity granting fulfilment of their desires. The deity whom they honour in their sacrifice they do not seek in the sky or on the mountains, but in the earth. It is often a female deity, an earth-mother, whom they address in their sacrifice. Already the nomadic animal breeders invented similar sacrifices to an antagonistic, a "hostile" brother of the good and life-giving high god, but among the agrarian tribes this earth-deity bears the character of the destroyer, the terrible one, and was more strongly expressed.

And in this culture circle the main victim is man himself. At first this choice may have been due to the lack of suitable animals—they were neither hunters nor breeders of animals; perhaps due also to an over-emphasis of the role of a "messenger": they were anxious to send as efficient a messenger as possible to the gods and spirits to the other world, and that was man. This choice then at once resulted in the invention of rites which could make this sacrifice particularly effective: above all they were anxious to find a "messenger" who was ready to be sent voluntarily. Therefore the victim was selected long before the actual sacrifice (from their own community) or bought as a slave, captured as an enemy, (frequently dedicated as a child). The victim is, in order to keep it in good spirits and consenting to the intended sacrifice well treated, it is allowed all kinds of liberties, all its desires are fulfilled, that it may not shy back from its fate. Especially in the time just before the sacrifice the victim is prepared for its role through impressive ceremonies, its power of resistance is impeded by sexual orgies, alcohol or drugs, and thus an eventual resistance against the imminent end is made impossible.

The manner of sacrifice is frequently extremely cruel. But this is not for lust of torture, but from the conviction of the magic power which exists in the victim and which should be utilised as far as possible for the sacrificers. This magic power lies in particular in the victim's blood, in its flesh, in its main organs (heart) and in its head. And just in this point the sacrificial complex of the agrarian tribes differs from that of the hunters and nomadic animal breeders. While the latter avoid as far as possible to shed blood and to wound the victim externally, the agrarian tribes often tear the victim to pieces while still alive. As blood-thirsty, barbarian and primitive this sacrificial complex may appear to us, there must have been ideas and convictions at the bottom of it which appealed as much to the primitive mind as to that of a high civilisation. For we find this sacrificial rite not only among the primitive hoe and shifting cultivators of India, and further of Indo-China and Indonesia, but also in the high civilisations of Greece and Rome, and Mexico. This elementary conviction is the same as that of the hunters and animal breeders: the belief in a mystical efficacy of a divine intermediary between god and man, represented either in a man or in an animal sacrificed and sent to the gods and spirits as messenger and intercessor for the sacrificers.

A really grandiose and deep synthesis of this sacrificial rite with that of the nomadic animal breeders has been worked out in India: in the *Aśvamedha* of the Indo-Aryans. For in the ritual which is described in the Vedic scriptures it is unique and found in India only. The abundance of sacrifices, prayers and symbolic rites which precede this horse sacrifice, accompany and follow it, is certainly in its essence and heart derived from the ancient treasure of traditions of the Indo-Aryans who in their origin and traditional form of culture surely belong to the nomadic animal breeders. A part of the prayers and ceremonies may have been invented and thought out by the priestly caste of the Brahmins right here in India. But certain, and even quite important elements obviously derive their origin from the sacrificial rite which we would like to call that of the agrarian tribes and which may have been in existence, especially in northern India, long before the immigration of the Aryans, in the range of the urban high civilisations.

The esoteric significance of the sacrificial rites, the erotic ceremonies of the sacrifice, the bloody sacrifices, the peculiar sacrifices which accompany the main sacrifice, in particular that of the old leper at the conclusion of the sacrificial feast—to mention only a few of these items—suggest an origin which in its essence is foreign to the horse sacrifice of the nomadic animal breeders. The name of the main wife of the feast's organiser, who has to attempt coitus with the dead horse, suggests already the origin of this rite among the people which primarily did not sacrifice a horse but a buffalo bull. *Mahiṣi* means "wife of the buffalo" (*mahiṣa*) or "wife of the buffalo god" (*Mahiṣasur*). Objects of art in temples of Tibet and western China often illustrate this scene and show a woman beneath a bull or buffalo in coitus position, above both in ecstatic posture the god of the dead *Yama* at whom the sacrifice was obviously addressed. Cattle and buffalo, now, are the most important domestic animals in the economy of the agriculturists, less so of the nomadic animal breeders.

We also remember that for the Greek mysteries the victim was a bull, not a horse. The *SāṅkāyanaŚrauta* shows that human sacrifices were nothing foreign to the Vedic Indians. The ceremonies which accompany this particular sacrifice are the same as applied in the *Aśvamedha*. We cannot go very wrong if we attribute this human sacrifice as also the corresponding bull or buffalo sacrifice to that high civilisation which the Vedic Indians found when they reached India. It might be that culture which immediately followed that of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, cultures in which, as the excavations show, mother goddesses and bulls placed a strongly emphasised cultic role. It is not improbable that these cults penetrated into the Indo-Aryan religion and later found toleration and even promotion in Hinduism as the well-known orgiastic cults of *Śakti.* Traces and relics of this sacrificial rite however are found in the buffalo sacrifice of the low castes in Central India and in Maharashtra, and the human sacrifices described above of the nobles and princes in eastern India, in Assam and in neighbouring Burma, as far as they are not derived from more ancient sacrificial rites. It is almost certain that the *meriah* of the Khonds belongs into this category. Even if the Khonds today live among Munda tribes this is no proof that they themselves belong to the Munda group. Moreover, they speak a Dravidian dialect, and were consequently for a long time exposed to a cultural influence which was supposed to have had a close connection with cults in which female deities played the most important role. The human sacrifice of the Khonds, consequently, and similar human and buffalo sacrifices in India and Burma are therefore not derived from the *Aśvamedha* of the ancient Vedic Indians, but from older sacrificial rites which were only later, in course of time, incorporated into the ritual of the *Aśvamedha.*

Abbé Dubois adds to his description of the *yagnam* an important note: He writes that in former times the *yagnam* was performed with simpler rites and that it assumed this extreme lavishness and splendour only in later time for which it is known and renowned in Indian literature. This development is probably due to the influence of megalith cultures for which the celebration of such feasts of merit are typical. Abbé Dubois mentions expressly that the Brahmin who presided over such a feast gained such social prestige through it. This is true in a much stronger measure naturally of the kings and princes who celebrated the *Aśvamedha.*

While the *Aśvamedha* in its later form was reserved for the princes for economic and social reasons, the *yagnam* probably was popular in its early and simple form generally among the Indo-Aryans. As the *yagnam* which Abbé Dubois describes conforms very much to the horse sacrifice of the Inner Asiatic nomadic animal breeders it probably constitutes the basic and elementary form of the *Aśvamedha*. In this simple early form the *yagnam* might have become popular wherever the Indo-Aryans settled down. Of course, this sacrifice did not have as its victim a horse, but other, still very valuable domestic animals, such as cattle, buffaloes, pigs, sheep and goats. Traces of such sacrifices can be found therefore wherever the Aryan language is predominant. But we have to remember that the Vedic religion has further developed and that the result of this development, Hinduism, has not only modified its concept of god, but also its sacrifices. Animal sacrifices are today tabooed by the higher Hindu castes, consequently just among those castes which in former times alone could perform the *Aśvamedha* (or *yagnam*). We shall consequently find the Aryan concept of god and the Aryan sacrificial rite in purest form among tribes which though they came early under Aryan influence did not follow its development into Hinduism. Such tribes are just found in the hills of Central India, Bihar and Orissa. They have comparatively early been influenced in their religion by the Aryans, through the raids of the Indo-Aryans (perhaps following the freely grazing sacred horse), through intermarriage of the later-born princes of the Aryans with the daughters of local chiefs and most probably also through the conversion work of Brahmins as hermits or wandering monks. It appears that a careful study of the religion, sociology and in particular of the myths and legends of these tribes will provide proof for this assumption.

But the meagre knowledge which already we today have of the religion of these tribes proves that in particular the Hindi and Mundari speaking tribes have the conception of a high god which is close to that of the inner-Asiatic (or more precisely: Indo-Aryan) nomadic shepherd races. Moreover, the high-god of these hill tribes usually bears an Aryan name: *Dharmi, Dharmesh, Gosai, Thakur Jiu, Thakur Deo, Bara Deo, Suriya Deo,* and occasionally already *Parmeshwar* or *Bhagwan.* The lack of a rich and complicated ritual for the sacrificial feast of this

high god too is a sign that this sacrificial form is of foreign origin and not derived from their own religious soil. This does not imply, however, that these tribes did not have any knowledge of a high god. But however it may have been in the past, today their high god wears Aryan features. And where his cult is still in vogue, it can be traced back to the *yagnam*.

The same may be true of the *Erkumpthpimi* of the Todas. This buffalo sacrifice shows so much similarity to the *yagnam* of the Indo-Aryans that we cannot but derive it from this sacrifice. If the Todas did not adopt this form of sacrifice from the Indo-Aryans, then they might have received it from them through the Badagas.

At last we return to the *sidoli* feast of the Korkus and to the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baigas. These two forms of sacrifice represent, as far as we know today, the religion of allied tribes, something unique. Nearest to the rite of erection of the *munda* among the Korkus is perhaps the rite which is known to all Munda tribes in this or that form: the erection of some sort of a funeral memorial. But the celebration of the *phul* ritual of the Korkus can only be compared with the *phulera* ritual of the Gonds and Baigas though between the two rituals there exist considerable differences. In any case the *phul* ritual of the Korkus provided the proof that the *phulera* ritual too is a funeral rite. In one case the rite is performed for a dead Korku, and in the other case for the sacrificed pig. Remarkable is also that the *phul* ritual of the Korkus has so many elements of the wedding ritual, as also in the *laru kaj* of the Gonds and Baigas. Perhaps the sacrifice of "accompanying victims" is from very ancient time conceived as a wedding, just as in the form of a "wedding with the dead". It is well known that this idea plays a role also in the *Aśvamedha* where the main wife of the feast's organiser has to play the role of the dead victim's wife in a still more drastic manner than the wife of the feast's organiser in the *sidoli* feast of the Korkus. However, this similarity is not sufficient to draw the conclusion that the *sidoli* and the *laru kaj* owed their origin to the *Aśvamedha*. In particular the rites which follow the sacrifice of the pig and which have so great a similarity with the bear sacrifice of the north-eastern Siberian tribes, cannot be explained in this manner.

It is also unthinkable that these rites have been invented by

the Gonds and Baigas quite independently. These rites have certainly to be traced back to a very ancient cultural layer which on one side somehow reached the Gonds and Baigas, and on the other side drew the Palaeo-Siberian tribes into their sphere of influence. This ancient culture is probably derived from that of those old and vanished agrarian peoples in southern Central Asia who through the gradual drying-up and silicification of Inner Asia lost their livelihood. The carriers of this agrarian culture may have emigrated partly towards the west, or towards the south. Their descendants may finally have reached Burma, Assam and even Central India. Since these Central Asiatic agrarian cultures also possessed megaliths (menhirs, steles, graves covered with stone slabs, etc.) this would also explain the megalith culture of the tribes in Burma, Assam and of the Munda tribes. It would at the same time also explain why we find, for instance, in the funeral rites of the Korkus elements which are usually common only among the nomadic animal breeders of high and inner Asia. As we have already seen and as A. Gahs has especially emphasised, these nomadic shepherd races have received in their religion also some contributions from an agrarian culture.

But we find many elements, especially in the *laru kaj*, which cannot be reconciled with the sacrificial rite of the agrarian culture, though we meet them again expecially among the hunters and shepherds of North and Central Asia. But it is not at all impossible that an agrarian people (partly without a proper understanding) accepted this sacrificial form simply from the hunters and shepherds and handed it on without modification to others. But it is also possible that some hunting tribes from inner Asia in the course of time were pushed off not into the north as the Palaeo-Siberians, but into the south or that they migrated with the agrarian peoples. Thus their descendants might have reached India and handed on to the Gonds and Baigas their ritual of the *laru kaj*. The fact that these rites are found solely—at least as far as we know today—among a few stray tribes, speaks for the assumption that these rites are only relics.

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If in this concluding meditation on the present material we have too often used the word "if" and "perhaps", this is not only due to the extra-ordinary complexity of the presented

material, but also due to the great gaps which exist in our knowledge of the Indian and Indo-Chinese tribes and cultures. An intensive and detailed study of these so long neglected tribes and cultures will probably shed more light on these problems which we have studied and presented here. But it is perhaps not completely useless at least to have shown the problems which still wait for their solution.

# GLOSSARY

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| *A. Asauca:* | Period of impurity after the death of a relative. |
| *Adhvaryu:* | A priest whose business is to recite the prayers of the Yajurveda. |
| *Agni:* | God of fire. |
| *Agnicayana:* | Fire-altar, preparation of the fire-altar. |
| *Amatyas:* | Sons, grandsons. |
| *Anustaraṇi:* | The cow sacrificed in the funeral rite to serve as food to the soul of the deceased on its journey to the ancients. |
| *Anumati:* | Divine favour, also a goddess. |
| *Ahavaniya:* | The eastern of the three funeral fires. |
| *Āpastamba-Śrauta-Sūtra:* | Rules and regulations of the sacrifices prescribed in the Taittirīya or Āpastamba School of the Black Yajurveda. |
| *Arghya:* | Offering of water in the funeral rite. |
| *Asadhadha:* | June-July. |
| *Aśv. G.:* | Aśvalāyaṇa Gṛya-Sūtra. |
| *Aupasana:* | Funeral fire. |
| *AV.:* | Atharva Veda. |
| *Avakā:* | A plant growing wild on marshland, on burialground. |
| *Baudhāyana:* | A Vedic school which rose up probably in southern India. |
| *Bharadvāja:* | A school of the Black Yajurveda. |
| *Bharad. Paddhati:* | Outline of the Bharadvāja school of teaching. |

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| *Dakṣina:* | The fee paid for the performance of a priestly function. |
| *Dīkṣā:* | Initiation. |
| *Ekanaksatre:* | A particular śrāddha ceremony. |
| *Ekaddiṣṭaśrāddha:* | Feeding of Brāhmans for one deceased relative. |
| *Garhapatya:* | The domestic sacrificial fire. |
| *Gṛhya*'s Aśv.: | Gṛhya Sutras of Aśvalāyaṇa. |
| *Juhu:* | A wooden spoon to pour ghee into the sacrificial fire. |
| *Kāma:* | The god of love. |
| *Kaśyapa:* | A Brāhman clan. |
| *Kat.:* | Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra. |
| *Kauś.:* | Kauśitaki-Brāhmaṇa. |
| *Kūdī:* | A plant bushes of which are tied to the feet of a deceased to wipe out his traces on his journey into the other world. |
| *Kuśa grass:* | (*Desmostachya bipinnata*), also called *darbha* grass, held sacred by Hindus. |
| *Loka:* | One of the three parts of the universe—heaven, earth, underworld. |
| *Manes:* | ancestors, forefathers. |
| *Manu:* | The Hindu law giver. |
| *Mithun:* | (*Bos frontalis*), a domesticated bovine animal, found mainly in the lower Eastern Himalayas and the mountains between India and Burma. It is not milked, used as a sacrificial animal. |
| *Nadirupani:* | A course for running water. |
| *Nagual:* | Guardian spirit of the American Indians. |
| *Nagualism:* | Belief of the Red Indians in an individual guardian spirit. |
| *Nar.:* | Nārāyaṇa. |
| *Navaśrāddha Purakapinda:* | A particular funeral rite. |

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| *Negritos:* | A dark, short (below 150 cm), but well proportioned human race, distributed over South Asia from India, over Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines and as far as New Guinea. |
| *Nyagrodha:* | A fig-tree. |
| *Paddhati:* | "Outlines" of the Bharadvāja texts. |
| *Palasa:* | (*Butea frondosa*), the "flame of the forest". |
| *P:* | Paraskara Gṛhya-Sūtra, domestic rules. |
| *Parvanaśrāddha:* | Feeding of Brāhmans for deceased relatives. |
| *Phalguni:* | The month of March. |
| *Piṇḍas:* | A ball of rice or flower, offered to the ancestors. |
| *Pitarah or pitṛ:* | Ancestors. |
| *Pitṛya prasdajya:* | A butter offering to the ancestors in the funeral rites. |
| *Prāṇāyatans:* | The seven openings of the human body. |
| *Pravargya:* | Libation of boiling milk. |
| *Prayascitta:* | Expiatory prayers and ceremonies. |
| *Prayascitta*'s Sankh: | SāṅkhāyanaŚrauta-Sūtra. |
| *Preta:* | The human soul between death and union with the ancestors. |
| *RV.:* | Rigveda. |
| *Sami:* | A hardwood tree (*Prosopis spicigera*), believed to contain fire, therefore employed to kindle the altar fire. |
| *(S. Śr. Ś.):* | Śāṅkhāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra. It contains texts and regulations of sacrifices and belongs to the White Yajurveda. |
| *Samcayana:* | Collection of bones after cremation. |
| *Santikarman:* | A propitiatory sacrifice, when suffering frequent misfortunes. |
| *Sapiṇḍas:* | Funeral rice balls, ancestors for whom the same piṇḍas are offered—dead clan members. |

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| *Sapindakarana:* | The rite through which the soul of deceased is admitted into union with the ancestors. |
| *Satapatha Bra.:* | Satapatha Brāhmana. |
| *Śmaśāna:* | Grave monument. |
| *Soma:* | The libation in all early Vedic sacrifices. The juice of a plant the identity of which is unknown, probably intoxicating or hallucinogenic. |
| *Śrāddha:* | A supplementary rite to the funerary ceremony, performed for a deceased relative. |
| *Taitt. Ar.:* | Taittirīya Atharveda, explanation of meaning in the Brāhmaṇas. |
| *Upasad:* | Veneration. |
| *Vaikh.:* | Vaikhanaṣa-smartasūtram, the domestic rules and laws of the Vaikhanaṣa School of the White Yajurveda. |
| *Veddids:* | A sub-group of the Proto-Australoid race, named after the Veddas, primitive hunters of Sri Lanka. |
| *Viniyoga:* | The use of mantras. |
| *Viphalphana:* | "Rich in dishes", *i.e.*, food offered to Brāhmans after a funeral. |
| *Viśve devah:* | Minor deities. |
| *Vitasti:* | A measure of 12 fingers' length. |
| *VS.:* | Viṣṇu Smṛti. |
| *Vyama:* | A measure of 5 cubits length. |
| *Yamavrata:* | "Will of Yama", the god of death. |

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## The Author

Rev. Stephen Fuchs (*b.* 1908), an Austrian by birth, became a Roman Catholic priest in 1934 and in the same year sailed to India where he did pastoral work among Christian Harijans and tribals in Central India. Interested in the traditional beliefs of the Indian tribes and castes, he began to study first the Balahis, an untouchable weaving caste in the Nimar District of Madhya Pradesh. Soon he also made a study of the Korkus, Gonds and Baigas of eastern Madhya Pradesh. After the Second World War, during which he was interned for some time by the British, he returned to Austria and studied Anthropology at the University of Vienna. He was awarded the Ph.D. degree in Anthropology in 1950 and returned to India in the same year. He was professor of Cultural Anthropology for four years at St. Xavier's College, Bombay. After that he taught physical and cultural anthropology at diverse Catholic institutions in India. During 1961-62 he was in the Philippines Islands at San Carlos University, Cebu City, as Visiting Professor of Anthropology and Indian Philosophy. He was until recently the Director of the Institute of Indian Culture, Bombay.

He is the author of several monographs on Indian castes and tribes, and of general studies on Anthropology and Religion. He has also published a great number of research papers in learned journals.

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